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SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
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IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

DUBLIN:

Printed for the METHODIST BOOK-ROOM, No. 13, White-friar-ſtreet, by JOHN JONES, No. 90, Bride-ſtreet; and ſold at the Methodiſt Preaching-houſes in Town and Country.

1804.

CALIFORNIA BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AUDITORIUM BUILDING
LOS ANGELES 13, CALIFORNIA

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SERMON LXXV.

ON HELL.

MARK ix. 48.

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

1. EVERY truth which is revealed in the Oracles of God, is undoubtedly of great importance. Yet it may be allowed, that ſome of thoſe which are revealed therein are of greater importance than others; as being more immediately conducive to the grand end of all, the eternal ſalvation of men. And we may judge of their importance, even from this circumſtance, that they are not mentioned once only in the ſacred writings, but are repeated over and over. A remarkable inſtance of this we have, with regard to the awful truth which is now before us. Our bleſſed Lord, who uſes no ſuperfluous words, who makes no *vain repetitions*, repeats

it over and over in the same chapter, and as it were in the same breath. So verse 43, 44, *If thy hand offend thee*, if a thing or person as useful as a hand, be an occasion of sin, and there is no other way to shun that sin, *cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell: into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* So again, verse 45, 46, *If thy foot offend thee cut it off. It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell: into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* And yet again, verse 47, 48, *If thine eye*, a person or thing as dear as thine eye *offend thee*, hinder thy running the race which is set before thee, *pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

2. And let it not be thought, that the consideration of these terrible truths, is proper only for enormous sinners. How is this supposition consistent with what our Lord speaks to those who were then doubtless the holiest men upon earth? Luke xii. 1, 4, *When innumerable multitudes were gathered together, he said to his disciples*, (the Apostles) *first of all, I say unto you, my friends, fear not them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I say unto you, fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him!* Yea, fear him under this very notion, of having power to cast into hell: that is, in effect, fear lest he should cast you into the place of torment. And this very fear, even in the children

children of God, is one excellent means of preserving them from it.

3. It behoves therefore not only the outcasts of men, but even *you his friends*, you that fear and love God, deeply to consider what is revealed in the Oracles of God, concerning the future state of punishment. How widely distant is this from the most elaborate accounts which are given by the Heathen Authors? Their accounts are (in many particulars at least) childish, fanciful, and self inconsistent. So that it is no wonder they did not believe themselves, but only related the tales of the vulgar. So *Virgil* strongly intimates, when after the laboured account he had given of the shades beneath, he sends him that had related it out at the Ivory gate, through which (as he tells us) only *dreams* pass: thereby giving us to know, that all the preceding account is no more than a dream. This he only insinuates; but his brother Poet, *Juvenal*, speaks out, flat and plain.

Esse aliquos manes, & subterranea regna,
Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum æra lavantur.

Even our children do not believe a word of the tales concerning another world.

4. Here on the contrary, all is worthy of God the Creator, the Governor of mankind. All is awful and solemn; suitable to his wisdom and justice, by whom *Tophet was ordained of old:* although originally *prepared*, not for the children of men, but *for the devil and his angels.*

The punishment of those who in spite of all the warnings of God, resolve to have their portion with the devil and his angels, will according to the ancient, and not improper division,

be either *Pœna damni*, what they lose, or *Pœna sensûs*, what they feel. After considering these separately, I shall touch on a few additional circumstances, and conclude with two or three inferences.

I. 1. And first let us consider the *Pœna damni*, the punishment of loss. This commences in that very moment, wherein the soul is separated from the body: in that instant the soul loses all those pleasures, the enjoyment of which depends on the outward senses. The smell, the taste, the touch delight no more: the organs that ministered to them are spoiled, and the objects that used to gratify them, are removed far away. In the dreary regions of the dead, all these things are forgotten: or if remembered, are only remembered with pain, seeing they are gone for ever. All the pleasures of the imagination are at an end. There is no grandeur in the infernal region: there is nothing beautiful in those dark abodes; no light but that of livid flames. And nothing new, but one unvaried scene of horror upon horror. There is no music but that of groans and shrieks, of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; of curses and blasphemies against God, or cutting reproaches of one another. Nor is there any thing to gratify the sense of honour: no; they are the heirs of shame and everlasting contempt.

2. Thus are they totally separated from all the *things* they were fond of in the present world. At the same instant will commence another loss; that of all the *persons* whom they loved. They are torn away from their nearest and dearest relations, their wives, husbands, parents,

rents, children, and (what to ſome will be worſe than all this) the friend which was as their own ſoul. All the pleaſures they ever enjoyed in theſe are loſt, gone, vaniſhed away. For there is no friendſhip in hell. Even the Poet who affirms (though I know not on what authority)

" Devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds:"

Does not affirm that there is any concord among the human fiends, that inhabit the great abyſs.

3. But they will then be ſenſible of a greater loſs, than all they have enjoyed on earth. They have loſt their place in Abraham's boſom, in the Paradiſe of God. Hitherto indeed it hath not entered into their hearts to conceive, what holy ſouls enjoy in the garden of God, in the ſociety of angels, and of the wiſeſt and beſt men, that have lived from the beginning of the world: (not to mention, the immenſe increaſe of knowledge, which they will then undoubtedly receive.) But they will then fully underſtand the value of what they have vilely caſt away.

4. But as happy as the ſouls in paradiſe are, they are preparing for far greater happineſs. For paradiſe is only the porch of heaven; and it is there the ſpirits of juſt men are made perfect. It is in heaven only that there is the fulneſs of joy, the pleaſures that are at God's right-hand for evermore. The loſs of this, by theſe unhappy ſpirits, will be the completion of their miſery. They will then know and feel, that God alone is the centre of all created ſpirits: and conſequently that a ſpirit made for God,

can have no reſt out of him. It ſeems that the Apoſtle had this in his view, when he ſpoke of thoſe *who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord.* Baniſhment from the preſence of the Lord, is the very eſſence of deſtruction to a ſpirit that was made for God. And if that baniſhment laſts for ever, it is *everlaſting deſtruction.*

Such is the loſs ſuſtained by thoſe miſerable creatures, on whom that awful ſentence will be pronounced, *Depart from me ye curſed!* What an unſpeakable curſe, if there were no other! But alas! This is far from being the whole: for to the puniſhment of *loſs* will be added, the puniſhment of *ſenſe.* What they loſe, implies unſpeakable miſery, which yet is inferior to what they feel. This it is, which our Lord expreſſes in thoſe emphatical words, *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

II. 1. From the time that ſentence was pronounced upon man, *Duſt thou art and unto duſt thou ſhalt return,* it was the cuſtom of all nations, ſo far as we can learn, to commit duſt to duſt: it ſeemed natural to reſtore the bodies of the dead to the general mother earth. But in proceſs of time another method obtained, chiefly among the rich and great, of burning the bodies of their relations, and frequently in a grand, magnificent manner. For which purpoſe they erected huge funeral piles, with immenſe labour and expence. By either of theſe methods the body of man was ſoon reſtored to its parent duſt. Either the worm or the fire ſoon conſumed the well-wrought frame; after which the worm itſelf quickly died, and the fire was entirely quench-

ed.

ed. But there is likewiſe a worm that belongs to the future ſtate; and that is a worm that never dieth. And there is a fire, hotter than that of the funeral pile: and it is a fire that will never be quenched.

2. The firſt thing intended by the worm that never dieth, ſeems to be a guilty conſcience, including ſelf-condemnation, ſorrow, ſhame, remorſe, and a ſenſe of the wrath of God. May not we have ſome conception of this, by what is ſometimes felt even in the preſent world? Is it not of this chiefly that Solomon ſpeaks, when he ſays, *The ſpirit of a man may bear his infirmities*, his infirmities or griefs of any other kind: *but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Who can bear the anguiſh of an awakened conſcience, penetrated with a ſenſe of guilt, and the arrows of the Almighty ſticking in the ſoul and drinking up the ſpirit! How many of the ſtout-hearted have ſunk under it, and choſe ſtrangling rather than life? And yet what are theſe wounds, what is all this anguiſh of a ſoul while in this preſent world, in compariſon of thoſe they muſt ſuffer when their ſouls are wholly awakened, to feel the wrath of an offended God! Add to theſe, all unholy paſſions, fear, horror, rage; evil deſires, deſires that can never be ſatisfied. Add all unholy tempers, envy, jealouſy, malice, and revenge: all of which will inceſſantly gnaw the ſoul, as the vulture was ſuppoſed to do the liver of Tityus. To theſe if we add hatred of God and all his creatures, all theſe united together may ſerve to give us ſome little, imperfect idea of the worm that never dieth.

3. We may obſerve a remarkable difference in the manner wherein our Lord ſpeaks concerning

cerning the two parts of the future punishment. He says, *Where* THEIR *worm dieth not*, of the one; *where* THE *fire is not quenched*, of the other. This cannot be by chance. What then is the reason for this variation of the expression?

Does it seem to be this? *The fire* will be the same, essentially the same, to all that are tormented therein: only perhaps more intense to some than others, according to their degree of guilt. But *their worm* will not, cannot be the same. It will be infinitely varied, according to their various kinds, as well as degrees of wickedness. This variety will arise partly from the just judgment of God, *rewarding every man according to his works*. For we cannot doubt but this rule will take place, no less in hell than in heaven. As in heaven, *every man shall receive his own reward*, incommunicably his, that is, the whole tenor of his tempers, thoughts, words and actions: so undoubtedly every man in fact will receive his own bad reward, according to his own bad labour. And this likewise will be incommunicably *his own*, even as his labour was. Variety of punishment will likewise arise from the very nature of the thing. As they that bring most holiness to heaven, will find most happiness there, so on the other hand it is not only true, that the more wickedness a man brings to hell, the more misery he will find there; but that this misery will be infinitely varied according to the various kinds of his wickedness. It was therefore proper to say *the fire*, in general; but *their worm* in particular.

4. But it has been questioned by some, "Whether there be any fire in hell? That is, any

any material fire." Nay, if there be any fire, it is unqueſtionably material. For what is immaterial fire? The ſame as immaterial water or earth! Both the one and the other is abſolute nonſenſe, a contradiction in terms. Either therefore we muſt affirm it to be material or we deny its exiſtence. But if we granted them there is no fire at all there, what would they gain thereby? Seeing this is allowed on all hands, that it is either fire or ſomething worſe. And conſider this: does not our Lord ſpeak *as if* it were real fire? No one can deny, or doubt of this. Is it poſſible then to ſuppoſe, that the God of truth would ſpeak in this manner, if it were not ſo? Does he deſign to fright his poor creatures? What, with ſcarecrows? With vain ſhadows of things that have no being? O let not any one think ſo! Impute not ſuch folly to the Moſt High!

5. But others aver, "It is not poſſible that fire ſhould burn always. For by the immutable law of nature, it conſumes whatever is thrown into it. And by the ſame law, as ſoon as it has conſumed its fewel, it is itſelf conſumed; it goes out."

It is moſt true, that in the preſent conſtitution of things, during the preſent laws of nature, the element of fire does diſſolve and conſume whatever is thrown into it. But here is the miſtake: the preſent laws of nature are not immutable. When the heavens and the earth ſhall flee away, the preſent ſcene will be totally changed: and with the preſent conſtitution of things, the preſent laws of nature will ceaſe. After this great change nothing will be diſſolved, nothing will be conſumed any more. Therefore if it were true, that fire

fire consumes all things now, it would not follow that it would do the same after the whole frame of nature has undergone that vast, universal change.

6. I say, "If it were true, that fire consumes *all things* now." But indeed it is not true. Has it not pleased God, to give us already some proof of what will be hereafter? Is not the *Linum Asbestum*, the incombustible flax, known in most parts of Europe? If you take a towel or handkerchief made of this (one of which may now be seen in the British Museum,) you may throw it into the hottest fire, and when it is taken out again it will be observed, upon the nicest experiment, not to have lost one grain of its weight. Here therefore is a substance before our eyes, which even in the present constitution of things, (as if it were an emblem of things to come) may remain in fire without being consumed.

7. Many writers have spoken of other bodily torments added to the being cast into the lake of fire. One of these, even pious Kempis, supposes that Misers, for instance, have melted gold poured down their throats: and he supposes many other particular torments, to be suited to men's particular sins. Nay, our great Poet himself supposes the inhabitants of hell to undergo variety of tortures: not to continue always in the lake of fire, but to be frequently, "by harpy-footed furies haled" into regions of ice; and then back again through "extremes by change more fierce." But I find no word, no tittle of this, not the least hint of it in all the Bible. And surely this is too awful a subject, to admit of such play of imagination. Let us keep to the

written

written word. It is torment enough, to dwell with everlasting burnings.

8. This is strongly illustrated by a fabulous story, taken from one of the Eastern Writers, concerning a Turkish King, who after he had been guilty of all manner of wickedness, once did a good thing: for seeing a poor man falling into a pit, wherein he must have inevitably perished, and kicking him from it, he saved his life. The story adds that when, for his enormous wickedness, he was cast into hell, that foot wherewith he had saved the man's life, was permitted to lie out of the flames. But allowing this to be a real case, what a poor comfort would it be? What if both feet were permitted to lie out of the flames, yea and both hands, how little would it avail? Nay, if all the body were taken out, and placed where no fire touched it, and only one hand or one foot kept in a burning fiery furnace; would the man meantime be much at ease? Nay, quite the contrary. Is it not common to say to a child, "Put your finger into that candle: can you bear it even for one minute? How then will you bear hell-fire!" Surely it would be torment enough to have the flesh burnt off from only one finger. What then will it be, to have the whole body plunged into a lake of fire burning with brimstone!

III. It remains now only to consider two or three circumstances attending the never-dying worm and the unquenchable fire.

1. And first consider the company wherewith every one is surrounded in that place of torment. It is not uncommon to hear even condemned criminals, in our public prisons say, "O! I wish I was

I was hanged out of the way, rather than to be plagued with theſe wretches that are round about me." But what are the moſt abandoned wretches upon earth, compared to the inhabitants of hell? None of theſe are as yet perfectly wicked, emptied of every ſpark of good: certainly not till this life is at an end; probably not till the day of judgment. Nor can any of theſe exert without control their whole wickedneſs on their fellow-creatures. Sometimes they are reſtrained by good men: ſometimes even by bad. So even the torturers in the Romiſh Inquiſition, are reſtrained by thoſe that employ them, when they ſuppoſe the ſufferer cannot endure any more. They then order the executioners to forbear: becauſe it is contrary to the rules of the houſe, that a man ſhould die upon the rack. And very frequently, when there is no human help, they are reſtrained by God, who hath ſet them their bounds which they cannot paſs, and ſaith, Hitherto ſhall ye come and no farther. Yea, ſo mercifully hath God ordained, that the very extremity of pain, cauſes a ſuſpenſion of it. The ſufferer faints away, and ſo (for a time at leaſt) ſinks into inſenſibility. But the inhabitants of hell are perfectly wicked, having no ſpark of goodneſs remaining. And they are reſtrained by none from exerting to the uttermoſt their total wickedneſs. Not by men: none will be reſtrained from evil by his companions in damnation. And not by God; for he hath forgotten them, hath delivered them over to the tormentors. And the devils need not fear, like their inſtruments upon earth, leſt they ſhould expire under the torture. They can die no more: they are ſtrong to ſuſtain, whatever the united malice, ſkill,

ſkill, and ſtrength of angels can inflict upon them. And their angelic tormentors have time ſufficient to vary their torments a thouſand ways. How infinitely may they vary one ſingle torment. Horrible appearances? Whereby, there is no doubt, an evil ſpirit, if permitted, could terrify the ſtouteſt man upon earth to death.

2. Conſider, Secondly, that all theſe torments of body and ſoul, are without intermiſſion. They have no reſpite from pain; but *the ſmoke of their torment, aſcendeth up day and night.* Day and night! That is ſpeaking according to the conſtitution of the preſent world; wherein God has wiſely and graciouſly ordained, that day and night ſhould ſucceed each other: ſo that in every four and twenty hours there comes a

"Daily Sabbath made to reſt
Toiling man and weary beaſt."

Hence we ſeldom undergo much labour, or ſuffer much pain, before

"Tir'd Nature's kind reſtorer, balmy ſleep"

ſteals upon us by inſenſible degrees, and brings an interval of eaſe. But although the damned have uninterrupted night, it brings no interruption of their pain. No ſleep accompanies that darkneſs: whatever ancient or modern Poets, either *Homer* or *Milton* dream, there is no ſleep, either in hell or heaven. And be their ſuffering ever ſo extreme, be their pain ever ſo intenſe, there is no poſſibility of their fainting away: no not for a moment.

Again. The inhabitants of earth are frequently diverted from attending to what is afflictive, by the cheerful light of the ſun, the viciſſitudes of the ſeaſons, "The buſy hum of men," and a

thouſand objects that roll around them with endleſs variety. But the inhabitants of hell have nothing to divert them from their torments even for a moment,

"Total eclipſe: no Sun, no Moon!"

no change of ſeaſons or of companions. There is no buſineſs, but one uninterrupted ſcene of horror, to which they muſt be all attention. They have no interval of inattention or ſtupidity: they are all-eye, all-ear, all-ſenſe. Every inſtant of their duration, it may be ſaid of their whole frame, that they are

"Tremblingly alive all o'er,
And ſmart and agonize at ev'ry pore."

3. And of this duration *there is no end!* What a thought is this? Nothing but eternity is the term of their torment! And who can count the drops of rain, or the ſands of the ſea, or the days of eternity? Every ſuffering is ſoftened, if there is any hope, though diſtant, of deliverence from it. But here

"Hope never comes, that comes to all"

the inhabitants of the upper world! What, ſufferings never to end!

"Never! Where ſinks the ſoul at that dread ſound?
Into a gulph how dark, and how profound!"

Suppoſe millions of days, of years, of ages elapſed, ſtill we are only on the threſhold of eternity! Neither the pain of body or of ſoul is any nearer an end, than it was millions of ages ago. When they are caſt into τὸ πῦρ, το ἄσβεστον. (How emphatical!) *The fire, the unquenchable*, all is concluded: *Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!*

Such

Such is the account which the Judge of all gives of the punishment which he has ordained for impenitent sinners. And what a counterbalance may the consideration of this be, to the violence of any temptation? In particular to the fear of man, the very use to which it is applied by our Lord himself. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." Luke xii. 4, 5.

What a guard may these considerations be, against any temptation from pleasure? Will you lose, for any of these poor, earthly pleasures, which perish in the using, (to say nothing of the present substantial pleasures of religion,) the pleasures of Paradise, such "as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into our hearts to conceive?" Yea, the pleasures of heaven, the society of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, the conversing face to face with God your Father, your Saviour, your Sanctifier, and the drinking of those rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand for evermore?

Are you tempted by pain either of body or mind? O compare present things with future. What is the pain of body which you do or may endure, to that of lying in a lake of fire burning with brimstone? What is any pain of mind, any fear, anguish, sorrow, compared to *the worm that never dieth? That never dieth!* This is the sting of all! As for our pains on earth, blessed be God, they are not eternal. There are some intervals to relieve, and there is some period to finish them. When we ask a friend that is sick, how he does, "I am in

pain now," says he; "but I hope to be easy soon." This is a sweet mitigation of the present uneasiness. But how dreadful would his case be if he should answer, "I am all over pain, and I shall be never eased of it. I lie under exquisite torment of body and horror of soul. And I shall feel it for ever." Such is the case of the damned sinners in hell. Suffer any pain then, rather than come into that place of torment.

I conclude with one more reflection, taken from Dr. *Watts*, "It demands our highest gratitude, that we who have long ago deserved this misery, are not plunged into it. While there are thousands that have been adjudged to this place of punishment, before they had continued so long in sin as many of us have done, what an instance is it of divine goodness, that we are not under this fiery vengeance? Have we not seen many sinners, on our right and our left, cut off in their sins? And what but the tender mercy of God, hath spared us week after week, month after month, and given us space for repentance? What shall we render unto the Lord, for all his patience and long-suffering, even to this day? How often have we incurred the sentence of condemnation by our repeated rebellion against God? And yet we are still alive in his presence, and are hearing the words of hope and salvation. O let us look back and shudder at the thoughts of that dreadful precipice, on the edge of which we have so long wandered! Let us fly for refuge to the hope that is set before us, and give a thousand thanks to the divine mercy, that we are not plunged into this perdition."

SERMON

SERMON LXXVI.

ON THE CHURCH.

EPHESIANS iv. 1——6.

I beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one ſpirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1. HOW much do we almoſt continually hear about *The Church!* With many it is matter of daily converſation. And yet how few underſtand what they talk of! How few know what the term means! A more ambiguous word than this, the *Church*, is ſcarce to be found

in the *Engliſh* language. It is ſometimes taken for a building ſet apart for public worſhip: ſometimes for a congregation, or body of people united together in the ſervice of God. It is only in the latter ſenſe that it is taken in the enſuing diſcourſe.

2. It may be taken indifferently for any number of people, how ſmall or great ſo ever. As *where two or three are gathered together in his name*, there is Chriſt; ſo (to ſpeak with St. *Cyprian*) "Where two or three believers are met together, there is a church." Thus it is that St. *Paul* writing to *Philemon* mentions *the church which is in his houſe*: plainly ſignifying, that even a Chriſtian Family may be termed a Church.

3. Several of thoſe whom God had *called out of* the world, (ſo the original word properly ſignifies) uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger Church: as the Church at *Jeruſalem*; that is, all thoſe in *Jeruſalem* whom God had ſo called. But conſidering how ſwiftly theſe were multiplied, after the day of Pentecoſt, it cannot be ſuppoſed that they could continue to aſſemble in one place: eſpecially as they had not then any large place, neither would they have been permitted to build one. In conſequence they muſt have divided themſelves even at *Jeruſalem*, into ſeveral diſtinct congregations. In like manner when St. *Paul*, ſeveral years after, wrote to the Church in *Rome* (directing his letter *To all that are in Rome, called to be ſaints*) it cannot be ſuppoſed that they had any one building capable of containing them all: but they were divided into ſeveral congregations, aſſembling in ſeveral parts of the city.

4. The

4. The first time that the Apostle uses the word *Church*, is in his preface to the former Epistle to the *Corinthians*: "Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth:" the meaning of which expression is fixt by the following words, "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus: with all that are in every place (not *Corinth* only; so it was a kind of circular letter) call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both yours and ours." In the inscription of his second letter to the *Corinthians*, he speaks still more explicitly: "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in all Achaia." Here he plainly includes all the Churches, or Christian congregations, which were in the whole province.

5. He frequently uses the word in the plural number. So Gal. i. 2, "Paul an Apostle—unto the Churches of Galatia," that is, the Christian congregations dispersed throughout that country. In all these places (and abundantly more might be cited) the word Church or Churches means, not the buildings where the Christians assembled (as it frequently does in the *English* tongue) but the people that used to assemble there, one or more Christian congregations. But sometimes the word *Church* is taken in Scripture in a still more extensive meaning, as including all the Christian congregations that are upon the face of the earth. And in this sense we understand it in our Liturgy when we say, "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth." In this sense it is unquestionably taken by St *Paul*, in his exhortation to the Elders of *Ephesus*, (Acts xx. 28.) "Take heed to the

the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood." *The Church* here undoubtedly means the Catholic or univerſal Church, that is, all the Chriſtians under heaven.

6. Who thoſe are that are properly *the Church of God*, the Apoſtle ſhews at large, and that in the cleareſt and moſt deciſive manner, in the paſſage above cited: wherein he likewiſe inſtructs all the members of the Church, how to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called"

7. Let us conſider firſt, Who are properly *the Church of God?* What is the true meaning of that term? *The Church at Epheſus*, as the Apoſtle himſelf explains it, means, *The ſaints*, the holy perſons *that are in Epheſus*, and there aſſemble themſelves together to worſhip God the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt: whether they did this in one, or (as we may probably ſuppoſe) in ſeveral places. But it is the Church in general, the Catholic or Univerſal Church, which the Apoſtle here conſiders as *one body:* comprehending not only the Chriſtians *in the houſe of Philemon*, or any one family; not only the Chriſtians of one congregation, of one city, of one province or nation; but all the perſons upon the face of the earth, who anſwer the character here given: the ſeveral particulars contained therein, we may now more diſtinctly conſider.

8. *There is one Spirit* who animates all theſe, all the living members of the Church of God. Some underſtand hereby the Holy Spirit himſelf, the Fountain of all ſpiritual Life. And it is certain, "If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his." Others underſtand

it

it of thoſe ſpiritual gifts and holy diſpoſitions which are afterward mentioned.

9. *There is*, in all thoſe that have received this Spirit, *one hope*, a hope full of immortality. They know, to die is not to be loſt: their proſpect extends beyond the grave. They can cheerfully ſay, "Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

10. *There is one Lord*, who has now dominion over them, who has ſet up his kingdom in their hearts, and reigns over all thoſe that are partakers of this hope. To obey him, to run the way of his commandments, is their glory and joy. And while they are doing this with a willing mind, they, as it were, "ſit in heavenly places with Chriſt Jeſus."

11. *There is one Faith*, which is the free gift of God, and is the ground of their hope. This is not barely the faith of a Heathen: namely, a belief that "there is a God," and that he is gracious and juſt, and conſequently "a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him." Neither is it barely the faith a devil: though this goes much farther than the former. For the devil believes, and cannot but believe, all that is written both in the Old and New Teſtament to be true. But it is the faith of St. *Thomas*, teaching him to ſay with holy boldneſs, *My Lord, and my God.* It is the faith which enables every true Chriſtian believer to teſtify with St. *Paul*, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himſelf for me."

12. *There*

12. *There is one baptiſm*, which is the outward ſign our one Lord has been pleaſed to appoint, of all that inward and ſpiritual grace, which he is continually beſtowing upon his Church. It is likewiſe a precious means, whereby this faith, and hope are given to thoſe that diligently ſeek him. Some indeed have been inclined to interpret this in a figurative ſenſe, as if it referred to that baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, which the Apoſtles received at the day of Pentecoſt, and which in a lower degree is given to all believers. But it is a ſtated rule in interpreting Scripture, Never to depart from the plain, literal ſenſe, unleſs it implies an abſurdity. And beſide, if we thus underſtood it, it would be a needleſs repetition, as being included in, *There is one ſpirit.*

13. *There is one God and Father of all*, that have the Spirit of adoption, which "crieth in their hearts, Abba, Father:" which *witneſſeth* continually *with their ſpirits*, that they are the children of God: *who is above all*—the moſt High, the Creator, the Suſtainer, the Governor of the whole univerſe. *And through all*—Pervading all ſpace, filling heaven and earth:

Totum
Mens agitans molem, & magno ſe corpore miſcens.

And in you all—in a peculiar manner living in you, that are one body, by one ſpirit:

Making your ſouls his lov'd abode,
The temples of indwelling God.

14. Here then is a clear unexceptionable anſwer to that queſtion, What is the Church? The Catholic or Univerſal Church is, All the perſons

perſons in the univerſe, whom God hath ſo called out of the world, as to entitle them to the preceding character; as to be *one body*, united by *one ſpirit*, having "one faith, one hope, one baptiſm: one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all."

15. That part of this great body, of the Univerſal Church, which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a *National* Church, as the Church of *France*, the Church of *England*, the Church of *Scotland*. A ſmaller part of the Univerſal Church, are the Chriſtians that inhabit one city or town, as the Church of *Epheſus*, and the reſt of the ſeven Churches mentioned in the Revelation. Two or three Chriſtian believers united together are a Church in the narroweſt ſenſe of the word. Such was the Church in the houſe of *Philemon*, and that in the houſe of *Nymphas*, mentioned Col. iv. 15. A particular Church may therefore conſiſt of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions. But ſtill, whether they be larger or ſmaller, the ſame idea is to be preſerved. They are one body, and have one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptiſm: one God and Father of all.

16. This account is exactly agreeable to the nineteenth Article of our Church, the Church of *England*: (only the Article includes a little more than the Apoſtle has expreſſed.)

"Of the CHURCH.

"The viſible Church of Chriſt is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the ſacraments be duly adminiſtred."

It

It may be obſerved, that at the ſame time our Thirty-nine Articles were compiled and publiſhed, a *Latin* tranſlation of them was publiſhed by the ſame authority. In this the words were "*Cœtus credentium*," "a congregation of believers," plainly ſhewing that by *faithful men*, the compilers meant, men endued with *living faith*. This brings the Article to a ſtill nearer agreement to the account given by the Apoſtle.

But it may be doubted, Whether the Article ſpeaks of a particular Church, or of the Church Univerſal? The title, "Of the Church," ſeems to have reference to the Catholic Church. But the ſecond clauſe of the Article mentions the particular Churches of *Jeruſalem*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria* and *Rome*. Perhaps it was intended to take in both: ſo to define the Univerſal Church, as to keep in view the ſeveral particular Churches of which it is compoſed.

17. Theſe things being conſidered, it is eaſy to anſwer that queſtion, What *is the Church of England?* It is that part, thoſe members of the univerſal Church, who are inhabitants of *England*. The Church of *England* is, that *body* of men in *England* in whom *there is one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith*, which have *one baptiſm*, and *one God and Father of all*. This and this alone is the Church of *England*, according to the doctrine of the Apoſtle.

18. But the definition of a Church, laid down in the Article, includes not only this, but much more, by that remarkable addition, "in which the pure word of God is preached, and the ſacraments be duly adminiſtred:" according to this definition, thoſe congregations in which the pure word of God (a ſtrong expreſſion!) is not preached,

preached, are no parts either of the Church of *England*, or the Church Catholic. As neither are thoſe, in which the ſacraments are not duly adminiſtred.

19. I will not undertake to defend the accuracy of this definition. I dare not exclude from the Church Catholic all thoſe congregations in which any unſcriptural doctrines, which cannot be affirmed to be *the pure word of God*, are ſometimes, yea frequently preached. Neither all thoſe congregations in which the ſacraments are not *duly adminiſtred*. Certainly if theſe things are ſo, the Church of *Rome* is not ſo much as a part of the Catholic Church: ſeeing therein neither is *the pure word of God* preached, nor the ſacraments *duly adminiſtred*. Whoever they are that have "one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all," I can eaſily bear with their holding wrong opinions, yea and ſuperſtitious modes of worſhip. Nor would I on theſe accounts ſcruple, ſtill to include them within the pale of the Catholic Church. Neither would I have any objection to receive them, if they deſired it, as members of the Church of *England*.

II. 20. We proceed now to the ſecond point. What is it to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called?"

It ſhould always be remembered, that the word *walk* in the language of the Apoſtle, is of a very extenſive ſignification. It includes all our inward and outward motions, all our thoughts, and words and actions. It takes in not only every thing we do, but every thing we either ſpeak or think. It is therefore no ſmall thing, to walk in this

ſenſe of the word, worthy of "the vocation wherewith we are called:" to think, ſpeak, and act, in every inſtance in a manner worthy of our Chriſtian calling.

21. We are called to walk, firſt, *with all lowlineſs*: to have the mind in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus; not to think of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think; to be little, and poor, and mean, and vile in our own eyes: to know ourſelves as alſo we are known by him to whom all hearts are open: to be deeply ſenſible of our own unworthineſs, of the univerſal depravity of our nature, (in which dwelleth no good thing) prone to all evil, averſe to all good, inſomuch that we are not only ſick, but dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, till God breathes upon the dry bones, and creates life by the fruit of his lips. And ſuppoſe this is done, ſuppoſe he has now quickened us, infuſing life into our dead ſouls: yet how much of the carnal mind remains? How prone is our heart ſtill to depart from the living God? What a tendency to ſin remains in our heart, although we know our paſt ſins are forgiven? And how much ſin, in ſpite of all our endeavours, cleaves both to our words and actions? Who can be duly ſenſible, how much remains in him of his natural enmity to God? Or how far he is ſtill alienated from God, by the ignorance that is in him?

22. Yea, ſuppoſe God has now thoroughly cleanſed our heart, and ſcattered the laſt remains of ſin: yet how can we be ſenſible enough of our own helpleſſneſs, our utter inability to all good, unleſs we are every hour, yea every moment endued with power from on high? Who is able to think one good thought, or to form one

one good desire, unless by that Almighty power which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure? We have need even in this state of grace, to be thoroughly and continually penetrated with a sense of this. Otherwise we shall be in perpetual danger of robbing God of his honour, by glorying in something we have received as though we had not received it.

23. When our inmost soul is thoroughly tinctured therewith, it remains, that we be *clothed with humility*. The word used by St. *Peter* seems to imply, that we be covered with it as with a surtout: that we be all humility, both within and without, tincturing all we think, speak, and do. Let all our words breathe this spirit, that all men may know we have been with Jesus, and have learned of him to be lowly in heart.

24. And being taught of him who was meek as well as lowly in heart, we shall then be enabled to *walk with all meekness*, being taught of him who teacheth as never man taught, to be meek, as well as lowly in heart. This implies not only a power over anger, but over all violent and turbulent passions. It implies the having all our passions in due proportion, none of them either too strong or too weak, but all duly balanced with each other, all subordinate to reason; and reason directed by the Spirit of God. Let this equanimity govern your whole souls: that your thoughts may all flow in an even stream, and the uniform tenor of your words and actions be suitable thereto. In this patience you will then *possess your souls*, which are not our own, while we are oft by unruly passions. And by this all men may know, that we are indeed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

25. Walk with all long-ſuffering. This is nearly related to meekneſs, but implies ſomething more. It carries on the victory already gained over all your turbulent paſſions, notwithſtanding all the powers of darkneſs, all the aſſaults of evil men or evil ſpirits. It is patiently triumphant over all oppoſition, and unmoved, though all the waves and ſtorms thereof go over you. Though provoked ever ſo often, it is ſtill the ſame, quiet and unſhaken; never being *overcome of evil*, but overcoming evil with good.

26. The *forbearing one another in love* ſeems to mean, not only the not reſenting any thing, and the not avenging yourſelves: not only the not injuring, hurting, or grieving each other, either by word or deed: but alſo, the bearing one anothers burdens; yea, and leſſening them by every means in our power. It implies the ſympathizing with them in their ſorrows, afflictions, and infirmities: the bearing them up, when without our help they would be liable to ſink under their burdens: the endeavouring to lift their ſinking heads, and to ſtrengthen their feeble knees.

27. Laſtly. The true members of the church of Chriſt, *endeavour*, with all poſſible diligence, with all care and pains, with unwearied patience, (and all will be little enough) to *keep the unity* of the ſpirit in the bond of peace: to preſerve inviolate the ſame ſpirit of lowlineſs and meekneſs, of long-ſuffering, mutual forbearance and love: and all theſe cemented and knit together by that ſacred tie, the peace of God filling the heart. Thus only can we be and continue living members of that Church which is the body of Chriſt.

28. Does

28. Does it not clearly appear from this whole account, why in the ancient Creed commonly called the Apoſtles', we term it the Univerſal or Catholic Church? *The Holy Catholic Church?* How many wonderful reaſons have been found out, for giving it this appellation! One learned man informs us, "The Church is called holy, becauſe Chriſt the head of it is holy." Another eminent Author affirms, "It is ſo called, becauſe all its ordinances are deſigned to promote holineſs." And yet another, "Becauſe our Lord *intended*, that all the members of the Church ſhould be holy." Nay, the ſhorteſt and the plaineſt reaſon that can be given, and the only true one is, The Church is called holy, becauſe it is holy: becauſe every member thereof is holy, though in different degrees, as he that called them is holy. How clear is this! If the Church, as to the very eſſence of it, is a body of believers, no man that is not a Chriſtian believer can be a member of it. If this whole body be animated by one ſpirit, and endued with one faith, and one hope of their calling; then he who has not that ſpirit, and faith, and hope, is no member of this body. It follows, that not only no common ſwearer, no ſabbath-breaker, no drunkard, no whoremonger, no thief, no liar, none that lives in any outward ſin: but none that is under the power of anger or pride, no lover of the world; in a word, none that is dead to God, can be a member of his Church.

29. Can any thing then be more abſurd than for men to cry out, "The Church! The Church!" And to pretend to be very zealous for it, and violent defenders of it; while they themſelves have neither part nor lot therein, nor in-

deed know, what the Church is. And yet the hand of God is in this very thing! Even in this his wonderful wisdom appears, directing their mistake to his own glory, and causing *the earth to help the woman*. Imagining that they are members of it themselves, the men of the world frequently defend the Church. Otherwise the wolves that surround the little flock on every side, would in a short time tear them in pieces. And for this very reason, it is not wise to provoke them more than is unavoidable. Even on this ground, let us if it be possible, as much as lieth in us, live peaceably with all men. Especially as we know not how soon God may call them too out of the kingdom of satan, into the kingdom of his dear Son.

30. In the mean time, let all those who are real members of the Church, see that they walk holy and unblameable in all things. *Ye are the light of the world!* Ye are *a city set upon a hill, and cannot be hid.* O *let your light shine before men!* Shew them your faith by your works. Let them see by the whole tenor of your conversation, that your hope is all laid up above! Let all your words and actions evidence the spirit whereby you are animated! Above all things, let your love abound. Let it extend to every child of man: let it overflow to every child of God. By this let all men know whose disciples ye are, because you love one another.

SERMON

SERMON LXXVII.

ON SCHISM.

1 CORINTHIANS xii. 25.

That there might be no Schism in the Body.

1. IF there be any word in the Engliſh tongue as ambiguous and indeterminate in its meaning as the word *Church*, it is one that is nearly allied to it, the word *Schiſm*. It has been the ſubject of innumerable diſputes, for ſeveral hundred years: and almoſt innumerable books have been written concerning it in every part of the Chriſtian world. A very large ſhare of theſe have been publiſhed in our country: particularly during the laſt century: and the beginning of the preſent. And perſons of the ſtrongeſt underſtanding, and the moſt conſummate learning, have exhauſted all their ſtrength upon the queſtion, both in converſation and writing. This has appeared to be more neceſſary than ever, ſince

ſince the grand ſeparation of the reformed from the Romiſh Church. This is a charge which the members of that Church never fail to bring againſt all that ſeparate from her: and which conſequently has employed the thoughts and pens of the moſt able diſputants on both ſides. And thoſe of each ſide have generally, when they entered into the field, been ſecure of victory: ſuppoſing the ſtrength of their arguments was ſo great, that it was impoſſible for reaſonable men to reſiſt them.

2. But it is obſervable, that exceeding little good has been done by all theſe controverſies. Very few of the warmeſt and ableſt diſputants, have been able to convince their opponents. After all that could be ſaid, the Papiſts are Papiſts, and the Proteſtants are Proteſtants ſtill. And the ſame ſucceſs has attended thoſe who have ſo vehemently diſputed about ſeparation from the Church of *England*. Thoſe who ſeparated from her were eagerly charged with Schiſm: they as eagerly denied the charge. And ſcarce any were able to convince their opponents, either on one ſide or the other.

3. One great reaſon why this controverſy has been ſo unprofitable, why ſo few of either ſide have been convinced, is this: they ſeldom agreed as to the meaning of the word concerning which they diſputed: and if they did not fix the meaning of this, if they did not define the term, before they began diſputing about it, they might continue the diſpute to their lives' end without getting one ſtep forward; without coming a jot nearer to each other than when they firſt ſet out.

4. Yet

4. Yet it muſt be a point of conſiderable importance, or St. *Paul* would not have ſpoken ſo ſeriouſly of it. It is therefore highly needful that we ſhould conſider,

First, the Nature, and
Secondly, the Evil of it.

I. 1. It is the more needful to do this, becauſe among the numberleſs books that have been written upon the ſubject, both by the Romaniſts and Proteſtants, it is difficult to find any that define it in a ſcriptural manner. The whole body of Roman Catholics define Schiſm, A ſeparation from the Church of *Rome:* and almoſt all our own writers define it, A ſeparation from the Church of *England.* Thus both the one and the other ſet out wrong, and ſtumble at the very threſhold. This will eaſily appear to any that calmly conſider the ſeveral texts wherein the word *Schiſm* occurs. From the whole tenor of which it is manifeſt, that it is not a ſeparation *from* any Church (whether General or Particular, whether the Catholic, or any National Church) but a ſeparation *in* a Church.

2. Let us begin with the firſt verſe, wherein St. *Paul* makes uſe of the word. It is the tenth verſe of the firſt chapter of his firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians.* The words are, *I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jeſus, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no ſchiſms,* (the original word is σχισματα) *among you.* Can any thing be more plain, than that the *ſchiſms* here ſpoken of, were not ſeparations *from,* but diviſions *in* the Church of *Corinth?* Accordingly it follows, *But that ye be perfectly united together, in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment.* You ſee

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ſee here, that an union in mind and judgment was the direct oppoſite to the *Corinthian* Schiſm. This conſequently was not a ſeparation from the Church or Chriſtian Society at *Corinth*; but a ſeparation in the Church: a diſunion in mind and judgment (perhaps alſo in affection) among thoſe who notwithſtanding this, continued outwardly united as before.

3. Of what nature this Schiſm at *Corinth* was, is ſtill more clearly determined, (if any thing can be more clear) by the words that immediately follow. *Now this I ſay*—This is the ſchiſm of which I ſpeak, you are divided into ſeparate parties: ſome of you ſpeaking in favour of one, ſome of another Preacher, *Every one of you ſaith*, (ver. 12.) *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas* (or *Peter.*) Who then does not ſee, that the ſchiſm for which the Apoſtle here reproves the *Corinthians*, is neither more nor leſs, than the ſplitting into ſeveral parties, as they gave the preference to one or another Preacher? And this ſpecies of ſchiſm there will be occaſion to guard againſt in every religious community.

4. The ſecond place where the Apoſtle uſes this word, is in the eighteenth verſe of the eleventh chapter of this epiſtle. *When ye come together in the Church*, the Chriſtian congregation, *I hear that there are diviſions* (the original word here alſo is *σχισματα ſchiſms*) *among you.* But what were theſe *ſchiſms?* The Apoſtle immediately tells you (v. 20.) *When you come together*, profeſſing your deſign is *to eat of the Lord's Supper, every one taketh before another his own ſupper*, as if it were a common meal. What then was the *Schiſm?* It ſeems in doing this, they divided

divided into little *parties*, which cherished anger and resentment, one against another, even at that solemn season.

5. May it not be observed (to make a little digression here, for the sake of those who are troubled with needless scruples on this head) that the sin which the Apostle charges on the communicants at *Corinth* in this chapter, is usually quite misunderstood. It was precisely this and nothing else, *The taking one before another his own supper:* and in such a shocking manner, that while *one was hungry, another was drunken.* By doing this, he says, *ye eat and drink* (not *damnation;* a vile mistranslation of the word, but) *judgment*, temporal judgment *to yourselves:* which sometimes shortened their lives. *For this cause*—For sinning in this vile manner, *many are sick and weak among you.* Observe here two things: First, What was the sin of the *Corinthians?* Mark it well, and remember it. It was *taking one before another his own supper*, so that while *one was hungry, another was drunken.* Secondly, What was the punishment? It was bodily weakness and sickness, which without repentance, might end in death. But what is this to *you?* You cannot commit *their* sin: therefore you cannot incur their punishment.

6. But to return. It deserves to be seriously remarked, that in this chapter, the Apostle uses the word *Heresies* as exactly equivalent with the word *Schisms. I hear*, says he, ver. 18, *that there are schisms among you, and I partly believe it:* he then adds, ver. 19, *for there must be heresies* (another word for the same thing) *among you, that they which are approved among you, may be made manifest.* As if he had said, "The wisdom of God

God permits it so to be, for this end, for the clearer manifestation of those whose heart is right with him." This word, therefore *(Heresy)* which has been so strangely distorted for many centuries, as if it meant erroneous opinions, opinions contrary to the faith delivered to the saints, which has been made a pretence for destroying cities, depopulating countries, and shedding seas of innocent blood: has not the least reference to opinions whether right or wrong. It simply means, wherever it occurs in scripture, *divisions* or *parties* in a religious community.

7. The third, and the only remaining place in this Epistle, wherein the Apostle uses this word, is the twenty-fifth verse of the twelfth chapter; where speaking of the Church (he seems to mean the Church Universal, the whole body of Christ) he observes, *God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there might be no schism in the body*, ver. 24, 25. He immediately fixes the meaning of his own words, *But that the members might have the same care one for another: and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.* We may easily observe, that the word *Schism* here, means the want of this tender care for each other. It undoubtedly means an alienation in affection in any of them towards their brethren: a division of heart, and parties springing therefrom, though they were still outwardly united together: though they still continued members of the same external Society.

8. But there seems to be one considerable objection against the supposing *Heresy* and *Schism* to

to mean the same thing. It is said, St. *Peter*, in the second chapter of his second Epistle, takes the word *Heresies* in a quite different sense. His words are, ver. 1. "There shall be among you false teachers, who will bring in damnable (or destructive) heresies, denying the Lord that bought them." It does by no means appear, that St. *Peter* here takes the word *Heresies* in any other sense than St. *Paul* does. Even in this passage it does not appear to have any reference to opinions good or bad. Rather it means, they will *bring in*, or occasion, *destructive parties* or *sects* (so it is rendered in the common French translation) who *deny the Lord that bought them*: such sects now swarm throughout the Christian world.

9. I shall be thankful to any one who will point to me any other place in the inspired writings, where this word *Schism* is to be found. I remember only these three. And it is apparent to every impartial reader, that it does not in any of these mean, a separation from any Church or body of Christians, whether with or without cause. So that the immense pains which have been taken both by Papists and Protestants, in writing whole volumes against Schism, as a separation, whether from the Church of *Rome*, or from the Church of *England*, exerting all their strength, and bringing all their learning, have been employed to mighty little purpose. They have been fighting with shadows of their own raising: violently combating a sin, which had no existence, but in their own imagination, which is not once forbidden, no nor once mentioned either in the Old or New Testament.

10. "But is there no sin resembling what so many learned and pious writers have termed *Schism?* and against which all the members of religious communities have need to be carefully guarded? I do not doubt but there is; and I cannot tell, whether this too, may not in a remote sense be called *Schism*. I mean, "A causeless separation from a body of living Christians." There is no absurdity in taking the word in this sense (though it be not strictly scriptural.) And it is certain, all the members of Christian communities should be carefully guarded against it. For how little a thing soever it may seem, and how innocent soever it may be accounted, *Schism* even in this sense, is both evil in itself, and productive of evil consequences.

12. It is evil in itself. To separate ourselves from a body of living Christians, with whom we were before united, is a grievous breach of the law of love. It is the nature of love to unite us together: and the greater the love, the stricter the union. And while this continues in its strength, nothing can divide those whom love has united. It is only when our love grows cold, that we can think of separating from our brethren. And this is certainly the case with any, who willingly separate from their Christian brethren. The pretences for separation may be innumerable; but want of love is always the real cause; otherwise they would still hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. It is therefore contrary to all those commands of God, wherein brotherly love is enjoined: to that of St. *Paul*, *Let brotherly love continue:* that of St. *John*, *My beloved children love one another:* and especially to that of our

our blessed Master, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Yea, *by this*, saith he, *shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*

12. And as such a separation is evil in itself, being a breach of brotherly love, so it brings forth evil fruit; it is naturally productive of the most mischievous consequences. It opens a door to all unkind tempers, both in ourselves and others. It leads directly to a whole train of evil-surmisings, to severe and unwarrantable judging of each other. It gives occasion to offence, to anger, and resentment, perhaps in ourselves as well as in our brethren, which, if not presently stopped, may issue in bitterness malice and settled hatred; creating a present hell wherever they are found, as a prelude to hell eternal.

13. But the ill consequences of even this species of Schism, do not terminate in the heart. Evil tempers cannot long remain within, before they are productive of outward fruit. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. As he whose heart is full of love, openeth his mouth with wisdom, and in his lips there is the law of kindness; so he whose heart is full of prejudice, anger, suspicion, or any unkind temper, will surely open his mouth in a manner corresponding with the disposition of his mind. And hence will arise, if not lying and slandering (which yet will hardly be avoided) bitter words, talebearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking of every kind.

14. From evil words, from talebearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking, how many evil works will naturally flow? Anger, jealousy, envy, wrong tempers of every kind, do not vent themselves merely

merely in words, but push men continually to all kind of ungodly and unrighteous actions. A plentiful harvest of all the works of darkness, may be expected to spring from this source: whereby in the end thousands of souls, and not a few of those who once walked in the light of God's countenance, may be turned from the way of peace, and finally drowned in everlasting perdition.

15. Well might our blessed Lord say, *Woe unto the world because of offences.* Yet *it must needs be, that offences will come:* yea, abundance of them will of necessity arise, when a breach of this sort is made, in any religious community; while they that leave it endeavour to justify themselves, by censuring those they separate from; and these, on the other hand, retort the charge, and strive to lay the blame on them. But how mightily does all this altercation grieve the Holy Spirit of God? How does it hinder his mild and gentle operations in the souls both of one and the other? Heresies and Schisms, (in the scriptural sense of those words) will sooner or later be the consequence: parties will be formed on one and the other side, whereby the love of many will wax cold. The hunger and thirst after righteousness, after either the favour or the full image of God, together with the longing desires, wherewith so many were filled, of promoting the work of God, in the souls of their brethren, will grow languid, and as offences increase, will gradually die away. And as the *fruit of the Spirit* withers away, *the works of the flesh* will again prevail: to the utter destruction, first of the power; and then of the very form of religion. These consequences are not imaginary, are not built on mere conjectures,

conjectures, but on plain matter of fact. This has been the case again and again, within these last thirty or forty years: these have been the fruits which we have seen over and over, to be consequent on such a separation.

16. And what a grievous stumbling block must these things be, to those who are without? To those who are strangers to religion? Who have neither the form nor the power of godliness? How will they triumph over those once eminent Christians! How boldly ask, "What are they better than us?" How will they harden their hearts more and more against the truth, and bless themselves in their wickedness? From which possibly the example of the Christians might have reclaimed them, had they continued unblameable in their behaviour. Such is the complicated mischief which persons separating from a Christian Church or Society, do, not only to themselves, but to that whole Society, and to the whole world in general.

17. But perhaps such persons will say, "We did not do this willingly: we were constrained to separate from that Society, because we could not continue therein with a clear conscience: we could not continue without sin. I was not allowed to continue therein, without breaking a commandment of God." If this was the case, you could not be blamed for separating from that Society. Suppose, for instance, you were a member of the Church of *Rome*, and you could not remain therein, without committing idolatry, without worshipping of idols, whether images or saints and angels, then it would be your bounden duty to leave that community, totally to separate from it. Suppose you could

not remain in the Church of *England*, without doing ſomething which the word of God forbids, or omitting ſomething which the word of God poſitively commands: if this were the caſe (but bleſſed be God, it is not) you ought to ſeparate from the Church of *England*. I will make the caſe my own. I am now, and have been from my youth, a member and a miniſter of the Church of *England*. And I have no deſire nor deſign to ſeparate from it, till my ſoul ſeparates from my body. Yet if I was not permitted to remain therein, without omitting what God requires me to do, it would then become meet and right, and my bounden duty to ſeparate from it without delay. To be more particular. I know, God has committed to me, a diſpenſation of the Goſpel. Yea, and my own ſalvation depends upon preaching it; *Woe is me if I preach not the Goſpel.* If then I could not remain in the Church without omitting this, without deſiſting from preaching the Goſpel, I ſhould be under a neceſſity of ſeparating from it, or loſing my own ſoul. In like manner, if I could not continue united to any ſmaller Society, Church, or body of Chriſtians, without committing ſin, without lying and hypocriſy, without preaching to others doctrines which I did not myſelf believe, I ſhould be under an abſolute neceſſity of ſeparating from that Society. And in all theſe caſes the ſin of ſeparation, with all the evils conſequent upon it, would not lie upon me, but upon thoſe who conſtrained me to make that ſeparation, by requiring of me ſuch terms of communion, as I could not in conſcience comply with. But ſetting aſide this caſe, ſuppoſe the Church or Society to which I am now united does not require

quire me to do any thing which the Scripture forbids, or to omit any thing which the Scripture enjoins, it is then my indispensable duty to continue therein. And if I separate from it without any such necessity, I am justly chargeable, (whether I foresaw them or no) with all the evils consequent upon that separation.

18. I have spoke the more explicitly upon this head, because it is so little understood; because so many of those who profess much religion, nay, and really enjoy a measure of it, have not the least conception of this matter, neither imagine such a separation to be any sin at all. They leave a Christian Society with as much unconcern, as they go out of one room into another. They give occasion to all this complicated mischief; and wipe their mouth, and say they have done no evil! Whereas they are justly chargeable before God and man, both with an action that is evil in itself, and with all the evil consequences which may be expected to follow, to themselves, to their brethren, and to the world.

19. I entreat you therefore, my brethren, all that fear God, and have a desire to please him, all that wish to have a conscience void of offence, toward God and toward man: think not so slightly of this matter, but consider it calmly. Do not rashly tear asunder the sacred ties, which unite you to any Christian Society. This indeed is not of so much consequence to *you* who are only a *nominal* Christian. For you are not now vitally united to any of the members of Christ. Though you are called a Christian, you are not really a member of any Christian Church. But if you are a living member, if you live the life that is hid with Christ in God, then take care how

how you rend the body of Christ, by separating from your brethren. It is a thing evil in itself. It is a sore evil in its consequences. O have pity upon yourself! Have pity on your brethren! Have pity even upon the world of the ungodly! Do not lay more stumbling blocks in the way of these for whom Christ died.

20. But if you are afraid, and that not without reason of *Schism*, improperly so called; how much more afraid will you be, if your conscience is tender, of *Schism* in the proper scriptural sense? O beware, I will not say of *forming*, but of *countenancing*, or *abetting* any *Parties* in a Christian Society! Never encourage, much less cause either by word or action, any *division* therein. In the nature of things, *there must be heresies* [divisions] *among you:* but keep thyself pure. Leave off contention before it be meddled with: shun the very beginning of strife. Meddle not with them that are given to dispute, with them that love contention. I never knew that remark to fail, "He that loves to dispute, does not love God." Follow peace with all men, without which you cannot effectually follow holiness. Not only *seek peace*, but *ensue it;* if it seem to flee from you, pursue it nevertheless. *Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.*

21. Happy is he that attains the character of a peace-maker in the Church of God. Why should not *you* labour after this? Be not content, not to stir up strife; but do all that in you lies, to prevent or quench the very first spark of it. Indeed it is far easier to prevent the flame from breaking out, than to quench it afterwards. However, be not afraid to attempt even this: the God of peace is on your side. He will

give

give you acceptable words, and will ſend them to the heart of the hearers. *Noli diffidere: noli diſcedere*, ſays a pious man: *Fac quod in te eſt; & Deus aderit bonæ tuæ voluntanti*, "Do not diſtruſt him that has all power: that has the hearts of all men in his hand. Do what in thee lies, and God will be preſent, and bring thy good deſires to good effect." Never be weary of well-doing: in due time thou ſhalt reap, if thou faint not.

SERMON

SERMON LXXVIII.

ON PERFECTION.

HEBREWS vi. 1.

Let us go on to Perfection.

THE whole sentence runs thus: *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,* which he had just before termed, *the first principles of the Oracles of God,* and *meat fit for babes,* for such as have just tasted that the Lord is gracious.

That the doing of this is a point of the utmost importance, the Apostle intimates in the next words; *This will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and have fallen away, to renew them again to repentance.* As if he had said, If we

we do not *go on to perfection*, we are in the utmoſt danger of *falling away*. And if we do fall away, it is *impoſſible* [that is, exceeding hard] *to renew again to repentance.*

In order to make this very important Scripture as eaſy to be underſtood as poſſible, I ſhall endeavour,

Firſt to ſhew, what Perfection is?

Secondly, to anſwer ſome objections to it: and,

Thirdly, to expoſtulate a little with the oppoſers of it.

Firſt, I will endeavour to ſhew, what Perfection is.

1. And firſt, I do not conceive the perfection here ſpoken of, to be the perfection of angels. As thoſe glorious beings never *left their firſt eſtate*, never declined from their original perfection, all their native faculties are unimpaired, their underſtanding in particular is ſtill a lamp of light, their apprehenſion of all things clear and diſtinct, and their judgments always true. Hence, though their knowledge is limitted, (for they are creatures) though they are ignorant of innumerable things, yet they are not liable to miſtake: their knowledge is perfect in its kind. And as their affections are all conſtantly guided by their unerring underſtanding, ſo all their actions are ſuitable thereto; ſo they do every moment not their own will, but the good and acceptable will of God. Therefore it is not poſſible for man, whoſe underſtanding is darkened, to whom miſtake is as natural as ignorance, who cannot think at all, but by the mediation of organs which are weakened

weakened and depraved, like the other parts of his corruptible body: it is not possible, I say, for man always to think right, to apprehend things distinctly, and to judge truly of them. In consequence hereof his affections, depending on his understanding, are variously disordered. And his words and actions are influenced more or less, by the disorder both of his understanding and affections. It follows, that no man while in the body, can possibly attain to Angelic Perfection.

2. Neither can any man while he is in a corruptible body, attain to Adamic Perfection. Adam before his fall, was undoubtedly as pure, as free from sin as even the holy angels. In like manner his understanding was as clear as theirs, and his affections as regular. In virtue of this, as he always judged right, so he was able always to speak and act right. But since man rebelled against God the case is widely different with him. He is no longer able to avoid falling into innumerable mistakes: consequently he cannot always avoid wrong affections, neither can he always think, speak, and act right. Therefore man, in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than Angelic Perfection.

3. The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance and error, and a thousand other infirmities. Now from wrong judgments, wrong words and actions will often necessarily flow. And in some cases, wrong affections also may spring from the same source. I may judge wrong of *you*: I may think more or less highly of you than I ought to think. And this mistake in my judgment, may not only occasion some-

thing

thing wrong in my behaviour: but it may have a ſtill deeper effect: it may occaſion ſomething wrong in my affection. From a wrong apprehenſion, I may love or eſteem you either more or leſs than I ought. Nor can I be freed from a liableneſs to ſuch a miſtake, while I remain in a corruptible body. A thouſand infirmities in conſequence of this, will attend my ſpirit, till it returns to God who gave it. And in numberleſs inſtances it comes ſhort of doing the will of God, as Adam did in Paradiſe. Hence the beſt of men may ſay from the heart,

> "Every moment, Lord, I need
> The merit of thy death,"

for innumerable violations of the Adamic as well as the angelic law. It is well therefore for us, that we are not now under theſe, but under the law of love. *Love is now the fulfilling of the law*, which is given to fallen man. This is now, with reſpect to us, *the perfect law*. But even againſt this, through the preſent weakneſs of our underſtanding, we are continually liable to tranſgreſs. Therefore every man living needs the blood of atonement, or he could not ſtand before God.

4. What is then the Perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, *My ſon give me thy heart*. It is the *loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his ſoul, and with all his mind*. This is the ſum of Chriſtian Perfection; it is all comprized in that one word, love. The firſt branch of it is the love of God: and as he that loves God loves his brother alſo, it is inſeparably connected with the

second, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets:* these contain the whole of Christian Perfection.

5. Another view of this is given us, in those words of the great Apostle, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* For although this immediately and directly refers to the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken in a far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole disposition of his mind, all his affections, all his tempers, both towards God and man. Now it is certain that as there was no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was wanting. So that *whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely,* are all included in *the mind that was in Christ Jesus.*

6. St. *Paul,* when writing to the *Galatians,* places Perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided *fruit of the Spirit,* which he describes thus. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace: long-suffering, gentleness, goodness: fidelity:* (so the word should be translated here) *meekness, temperance.* What a glorious constellation of graces is here! Now suppose all these things to be knit together in one, to be united together, in the soul of a believer, this is Christian Perfection.

7. Again. He writes to the Christians at *Ephesus,* of *putting on the new man, which is created after God, in righteousness and true holiness.* And to the *Colossians,* of *the new man, renewed after the image of him that created him:* plainly referring to the words in Genesis (chap. i. 27,) *So God created man in his own image.* Now the moral

moral image of God, consists (as the Apostle observes) "in righteousness and true holiness." By sin this is totally destroyed. And we never can recover it, till we are "created anew in Christ Jesus." And this is Perfection.

8. St. *Peter* expresses it in a still different manner, though to the same effect. "As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation," 1 *Peter* i. 16. According to this Apostle then, Perfection is another name for universal holiness: inward and outward righteousness: holiness of life arising from holiness of heart.

9. If any expressions can be stronger than these, they are those of St. *Paul* to the *Thessalonians*: (1 Epistle v. 23) "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly: and may the whole of you, the spirit, the soul and the body (this is the literal translation) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"

10. We cannot shew this sanctification in a more excellent way, than by complying with that exhortation of the Apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies" (yourselves, your souls and bodies; a part put for the whole, by a common figure of speech) "a living sacrifice unto God;" to whom ye were consecrated many years ago in baptism. When, what was then devoted is actually presented to God, then is the man of God perfect.

11. To the same effect St. *Peter* says, 1 Epistle ii. 5. "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." But what sacrifices shall we offer now, seeing the Jewish dispensation is at an end? If you have truly presented yourselves to God, you offer up

to him continually, all your thoughts, and words and actions, through the Son of his love, as a ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving.

12. Thus you experience, that he whoſe name is called Jeſus, does not bear that name in vain: that he does in fact "ſave his people from their ſins," the root as well as the branches. And this "Salvation from from ſin," from all ſin, is another deſcription of Perfection, though indeed it expreſſes only the leaſt, the loweſt branch of it, only the negative part of the great ſalvation.

II. I propoſed in the ſecond place, to anſwer ſome objections to this ſcriptural account of Perfection.

1. One common objection to it is, That there is no promiſe of it in the word of God. If this were ſo, we muſt give it up: we ſhould have no foundation to build upon. For the promiſes of God are the only ſure foundation of our hope. But ſurely there is a very clear and full promiſe, that we ſhall all love the Lord our God with all our hearts. So we read Deut. xxx. 6. "Then will I circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul." Equally expreſs is the word of our Lord, which is no leſs a promiſe, though in the form of a command, (Matt. xxii. 37.) "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind:" no words can be more ſtrong than theſe, no promiſe can be more expreſs. In like manner, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf" is as expreſs a promiſe as a command.

2. And indeed that general and unlimited promiſe, which runs through the whole goſpel diſpenſation,

diſpenſation, "I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts," turns all the commands into promiſes: and conſequently that among the reſt, "Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus." The command here is equivalent to a promiſe, and gives us full reaſon to expect, that he will work in us what he requires of us.

3. With regard to the fruit of the Spirit, the Apoſtle in affirming, "The fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace: long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, temperance:" does in effect affirm, that the Holy Spirit actually works love, and theſe other tempers in thoſe that are led by him. So that here alſo we have firm ground to tread upon: this ſcripture likewiſe being equivalent to a promiſe, and aſſuring us that all theſe ſhall be wrought in us, provided we are led by the Spirit.

4. And when the Apoſtle ſays to the Epheſians, (chap. iv. 21.) "Ye have been taught, as the truth is in Jeſus, to be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, which is created after God," (that is, after the image of God,) "in righteouſneſs and true holineſs:" he leaves us no room to doubt, but God will thus "renew *us* in the ſpirit of our mind," and "create us anew in the image of God, wherein we were at firſt created." Otherwiſe it could not be ſaid, That this is "the truth as it is in Jeſus."

5. The command of God given by St. Peter, "Be ye holy as he that hath called you is holy in all manner of converſation," implies a promiſe, that we ſhall be thus holy, if we are not wanting to ourſelves. Nothing can be wanting on God's

part: as he has called us to holineſs, he is undoubtedly willing, as well as able, to work this holineſs in us. For he cannot mock his helpleſs creatures, calling us to receive what he never intends to give. That he does call us thereto is undeniable, therefore he will give it, if we are not diſobedient to the heavenly calling.

6. The prayer of St. Paul for the Theſſalonians, That God would "ſanctify them throughout," and "that the whole of them, the ſpirit, the ſoul, and the body might be preſerved blameleſs:" will undoubtedly be heard in behalf of all the children of God, as well as of thoſe at Theſſalonica. Hereby therefore all Chriſtians are encouraged to expect the ſame bleſſing from "the God of peace," namely, That they alſo ſhall be "ſanctified throughout, in ſpirit, ſoul and body:" and that "the whole of them ſhall be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

7. But the great queſtion is, Whether there is any promiſe in ſcripture, that we ſhall be *ſaved from ſin?* Undoubtedly there is. Such is that promiſe, Pſalm xxx. 8. "He ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his ſins:" exactly anſwerable to thoſe words of the angel, "He ſhall ſave his people from their ſins." And ſurely "he is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt, them that come unto God through him." Such is that glorious promiſe given through the prophet Ezekiel, in the xxxvith chapter, "Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean; from all your filthineſs and from all your idols will I cleanſe you: a new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you: and I will take away the ſtony out of your fleſh: and I will give you a heart

heart of flesh: and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them," ver. 25,—27. Such, (to mention no more) is that pronounced by Zechariah, (Luke i. 73,—75,) "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies" (and such doubtless are all our sins) "to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." The last part of this promise is peculiarly worthy of our observation. Lest any should say, "True, we shall be saved from our sins when we die;" that clause is remarkably added, as if on purpose to obviate this pretence, "all the days of our life." With what modesty then can any one affirm, "That none shall enjoy this liberty *till death?*"

8. "But, say some, this cannot be the meaning of the words; for the thing is impossible." It is impossible to men: but the things impossible with men, are possible with God. "Nay, but this is impossible in its own nature: for it implies a contradiction, that a man should be saved from all sin, while he is in a sinful body."

There is a great deal of force in this objection. And perhaps we allow most of what you contend for. We have already allowed that while we are in the body, we cannot be wholly free from mistake. Notwithstanding all our care, we shall still be liable to judge wrong in many instances. And a mistake in judgment will very frequently occasion a mistake in practice. Nay a wrong judgment may occasion something in the temper or passions, which is not strictly right. It may occasion needless fear, or ill-grounded hope; unreasonable

ble love, or unreaſonable averſion. But all this is no way inconſiſtent with the Perfection above deſcribed.

9. You ſay, "Yes it is inconſiſtent with the laſt article: it cannot conſiſt with ſalvation from ſin." I anſwer, It will perfectly well conſiſt with ſalvation from ſin, according to that definition of ſin, (which I apprehend to be the Scriptural definition of it.) "A voluntary tranſgreſſion of a known law." "Nay, but all tranſgreſſion of the law of God, whether voluntary or involuntary, are ſin. For St: John ſays, All "ſin is a tranſgreſſion of the law." True, but he does not ſay, "All tranſgreſſion of the law is ſin." This I deny: let him prove it that can.

To ſay the truth, this is a mere ſtrife of words. You ſay, "None is ſaved from ſin in *your* ſenſe of the word: but I do not admit of that ſenſe, becauſe the word is never ſo taken in ſcripture. And you cannot deny the poſſibility of being ſaved from ſin, in *my* ſenſe of the word. And this is the ſenſe wherein the word ſin is over and over taken in ſcripture.

"But ſurely we cannot be ſaved from ſin, while we dwell in a *ſinful body*." A *ſinful body?* I pray obſerve, how deeply ambiguous, how equivocal this expreſſion is? But there is no authority for it in ſcripture: the word *ſinful body* is never found there. And as it is totally unſcriptural, ſo it is palpably abſurd. For no *body*, or matter of any kind can be *ſinful*: ſpirits alone are capable of ſin. Pray in what part of the body ſhould ſin lodge? It cannot lodge in the ſkin, nor in the muſcles, or nerves, or veins, or arteries: it cannot be in the bones any more than in

in the hair, or nails. Only the ſoul can be the ſeat of ſin.

10. But does not St. Paul himſelf ſay, "They that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God?" I am afraid the ſound of theſe words has deceived many unwary ſouls; who have been told thoſe words, "they that are in the fleſh," mean the ſame as they that are in the body. No, nothing leſs. *The fleſh* in this text no more means the body than it does the ſoul. Abel, Enoch, Abraham; yea, all that cloud of witneſſes recited by St. Paul in the eleventh of the Hebrews, did actually pleaſe God, while they were in the body, as he himſelf teſtifies. The expreſſion therefore here means neither more nor leſs, than they that are unbelievers, they that are in their natural ſtate, they that are without God in the world.

11. But let us attend to the reaſon of the thing. Why cannot the Almighty ſanctify the ſoul while it is in the body? Cannot he ſanctify *you* while you are in the houſe, as well as in the open air? Can the walls of brick or ſtone hinder him? No more can theſe walls of fleſh and blood, hinder him a moment from ſanctifying you throughout. He can juſt as eaſily ſave you from all ſin in the body as out of the body.

"But has he promiſed, thus to ſave us from ſin, while we are in the body? Undoubtedly he has: for a promiſe is implied in every commandment of God: conſequently in that, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind." For this and every other commandment is given, not to the dead, but to the living. It is expreſſed in the words above recited, That we ſhould

"walk

"walk in holineſs before him all the days of our life."

I have dwelt the longer on this, becauſe it is the grand argument of thoſe that oppoſe ſalvation from ſin: and alſo becauſe it has not been ſo frequently and ſo fully anſwered: whereas the arguments taken from ſcripture, have been anſwered a hundred times over.

12. But a ſtill more plauſible objection remains, taken from experience: which is, That there are no living witneſſes of this ſalvation from ſin. In anſwer to this I allow.

1. That there are not many: even in this ſenſe, there are *not many fathers*. Such is our hardneſs of heart! ſuch our flowneſs to believe what both the Prophets and Apoſtles have ſpoke, that there are few, exceeding few true witneſſes of the great ſalvation.

I allow, 2. There are falſe witneſſes who either deceive their own ſouls, and ſpeak of the things they know not: or "ſpeak lies in hypocriſy. And I have frequently wondered, that we have not more of both ſorts. It is nothing ſtrange, that men of warm imaginations ſhould deceive themſelves in this matter. Many do the ſame with regard to juſtification: they imagine they are juſtified, and are not. But though many imagine it falſely, yet there are ſome that are truly juſtified. And thus though many imagine they are ſanctified, and are not, yet there are ſome that are really ſanctified. I allow, 3dly, That ſome who once enjoyed full ſalvation, have now totally loſt it. They once walked in glorious liberty, giving God their whole heart, "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceaſing, and in every thing giving thanks." But it is paſt. They now are ſhorn of their ſtrength,

ſtrength, and become like other man. Yet perhaps they do not give up their confidence; they ſtill have a ſenſe of his pardoning love. But even this is frequently aſſaulted by doubts and fears, ſo that they hold it with a trembling hand.

13. "Nay this (ſay ſome pious and ſenſible men) is the very thing which we contend for. We grant, it may pleaſe God, to make ſome of his children for a time unſpeakably holy and happy. We will not deny, that they may enjoy all the holineſs and happineſs which you ſpeak of. But it is only *for a time:* God never deſigned, that it ſhould continue to their lives end. Conſequently ſin is only ſuſpended: it is not deſtroyed."

This you affirm. But it is a thing of ſo deep importance, that it cannot be allowed without clear and cogent proof. And where is the proof? We know that in general "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He does not repent of any gifts which he hath beſtowed upon the children of men. And how does the contrary appear, with regard to this particular gift of God? Why ſhould we imagine, that he will make an exception, with reſpect to the moſt precious of all his gifts on this ſide heaven? Is he not as able to give it us always, as to give it once? As able to give it for fifty years, as for one day? And how can it be proved, That he is not willing to continue this his loving kindneſs? How is this ſuppoſition, that he is not willing, conſiſtent with the poſitive aſſertion of the Apoſtle? who after exhorting the Chriſtians at Theſſalonica, and in them all Chriſtians in all ages, to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceaſing, and in every thing give thanks," immediately adds (as if on purpoſe to anſwer thoſe, who

who denied, not the *power*, but the *will* of God to work in them.) *For this is* the will "of God concerning you in Chriſt Jeſus. Nay, and it is remarkable, that after he had delivered that glorious promiſe (ſuch it properly is) in the twenty-third verſe, "The very God of peace ſhall ſanctify you wholly: and the whole of you (ſo it is in the original) the ſpirit, the ſoul, and the body ſhall be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:" he adds again, "Faithful is he that hath called you, who alſo will do it." He *will* not only ſanctify you wholly, but will preſerve you in that ſtate, until he comes to receive you unto himſelf.

14. Agreeable to this is the plain matter of fact. Several perſons have enjoyed this bleſſing, without any interruption for many years. Several enjoy it at this day. And not a few have enjoyed it unto their death, as they have declared with their lateſt breath; calmly witneſſing, that God had ſaved them from all ſin, till their ſpirit returned to God.

15. As to the whole of the objections taken from experience, I deſire it may be obſerved farther, either the perſons objected to have attained Chriſtian Perfection, or they have not. If they have not, whatever objections are brought againſt them, ſtrike wide of the mark. For they are not the perſons we are talking of: therefore whatever they are or do, is beſide the queſtion. But if they have attained it, if they anſwer the deſcription given, under the nine preceding articles, no reaſonable objection can lie againſt them. They are ſuperior to all cenſure. And "every tongue that riſeth up againſt them will they utterly condemn."

16. "But

16 "But I never saw one (continues the objector) that enfwered my idea of Perfection." It may be fo. And it is poffible, (as I obferved elfewhere) you never will. For your idea includes abundantly too much: even freedom from thofe infirmities, which are not feparable from a ftate that is connected with flefh and blood. But if you keep to the account that is given above, and allow for the weaknefs of human underftanding, you may fee at this day undeniable inftances of genuine, fcriptural Perfection.

III. 1. It only remains, in the third place to expoftulate a little with oppofers of this Perfection.

Now permit me to afk, Why are you fo angry with thofe who profefs to have attained this? And fo mad (I cannot give it any fofter title) againft Chriftian Perfection? Againft the moft glorious gift which God ever gave to the children of men upon earth? View it in every one of the preceding points of light, and fee what it contains that is either odious or terrible: that is calculated to excite either hatred or fear, in any reafonable creature.

What rational objection can you have, to the loving the Lord your God with all your heart? Why fhould you be afraid of it? Would it do you any hurt? Would it leffen your happinefs, either in this world or the world to come? And why fhould you be unwilling, that others fhould give him their whole heart? Or that they fhould love their neighbours as themfelves? Yea, "as Chrift hath loved us?" Is this deteftable? Is it the proper object of hatred? Or is it the moft amiable thing under the fun? Is it proper to move terror? Is it not rather defirable in the higheft degree?

2. Why are you ſo averſe to having in you the whole "mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus?" All the affections, all the tempers and diſpoſitions which were in him, while he dwelt among men? Why ſhould you be afraid of this? Would it be any worſe for you, were God to work in you this very hour, all the mind that was in him? If not why ſhould you hinder others from ſeeking this bleſſing? Or be diſpleaſed at thoſe who think they have attained it? Is any thing more lovely? Any thing more to be deſired by every child of man?

3. Why are you averſe to having the whole "fruit of the ſpirit? Love, joy, peace; long-ſuffering, meekneſs, gentleneſs: fidelity, goodneſs, temperance?" Why ſhould you be afraid of having all theſe planted in your inmoſt ſoul? As "againſt theſe there is no law," ſo there cannot be any reaſonable objection. Surely nothing is more deſirable, than that all theſe tempers ſhould take deep root in your heart: nay, in the hearts of all that name the name of Chriſt: yea, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

4. What reaſon have you to be afraid of, or to entertain any averſion to the being "renewed in the whole image of him that created you!" Is not this more deſirable than any thing under heaven? Is it not conſummately amiable? What can you wiſh for in compariſon of this, either for your own ſoul, or for thoſe for whom you entertain the ſtrongeſt and tendereſt affection? And when you enjoy this, what remains, but to be "changed from glory into glory, by the ſpirit of the Lord?"

5. Why ſhould you be averſe to univerſal holineſs? The ſame thing under another name. Why ſhould you entertain any prejudice againſt this, or look upon it with apprehenſion? Whether

you

you underſtand by that term the being inwardly conformed to the whole image and will of God; or an outward behaviour, in every point ſuitable to that conformity. Can you conceive any thing more amiable than this? Any thing more deſirable? Set prejudice aſide, and ſurely you will deſire to ſee it diffuſed over all the earth.

6. Is Perfection (to vary the expreſſion) the being "ſanctified throughout in ſpirit, ſoul and body?" What lover of God and man can be averſe to this, or entertain frightful apprehenſions of it? Is it not in your beſt moments your deſire to be all of a piece? All conſiſtent with yourſelf? "All faith, all meekneſs, all love?" And ſuppoſe you were once poſſeſt of this glorious liberty, would not you wish to continue therein? To be preſerved "blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt?"

7. For what cauſe ſhould you that are children of God, be averſe to, or afraid of preſenting yourſelves, your ſouls and bodies as a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God? to God your Creator, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier? Can any thing be more deſirable than this entire ſelf-dedication to him? And is it not your wiſh that all mankind ſhould unite in this "reaſonable ſervice?" Surely no one can be averſe to this without being an enemy to all mankind.

8. And why ſhould you be afraid of or averſe to what is naturaly implied in this? Namely the offering up all our thoughts, and words, and actions, as a ſpiritual ſacrifice to God, acceptable to him through the blood and interceſſion of his well-beloved Son? Surely you cannot deny that this is good and profitable to men, as well as pleaſing to God. Should you not then devoutly pray, that

both you and all mankind, may thus worship him in spirit and in truth.

9. Suffer me to ask one question more. Why should any man of reason and religion, be either afraid of, or averse to salvation from all sin? Is not this the greatest evil on this side hell? And if so, does it not naturally follow, that an entire deliverance from it is one of the greatest blessings on this side heaven? How earnestly then should it be prayed for by all the children of God? By sin I mean, "a voluntary transgression of a known law." Are you averse to being delivered from this? Are you afraid of such a deliverance? Do you then love sin, that you are so unwilling to part with it? Surely no. You do not love either the devil or his works. You rather wish to be totally delivered from them: to have sin rooted out both of your life and your heart.

10. I have frequently observed, and not without surprise, that the opposers of Perfection, are more vehement against it when it is placed in this view, than in any other whatsoever: they will allow all you say of the love of God and man; of the mind which was in Christ, of the fruit of the spirit, of the image of God, of universal holiness, of entire self-dedication, of sanctification in spirit, soul, and body: yea, and of the offering up all our thoughts, words and actions, as a sacrifice to God. All this they will allow, so we will allow sin, a little sin, to remain in us till death.

11. Pray compare this with that remarkable passage in "John Bunyan's Holy War. When *Immanuel*, says he, had driven *Diabolus* and all his forces out of the city of *Mansoul*, *Diabolus* preferred a petition to *Immanuel*, that he might have only a small part of the city. When this was rejected,

jected, he begged to have only a little room within the walls. But *Immanuel* answered, "He should have no place in it at all, no not to rest the sole of his foot."

Had not the good old man forgot himself? Did not the force of truth so prevail over him here, as utterly to overturn his own system? To assert Perfection in the clearest manner? For if this is not salvation from sin, I cannot tell what is.

12. "No, says a great man, this is the error of errors: I hate it from my heart. I pursue it through all the world with fire and sword." Nay, why so vehement? Do you seriously think there is no error under heaven equal to this? Here is something which I cannot understand. Why are those that oppose salvation from sin, few excepted, so eager? I had almost said furious? Are you fighting *pro aris & focis?* For God and your country! For all you have in the world? For all that is near and dear unto you? For your liberty? Your life? In God's name, why are you so fond of sin? What good has it ever done you? What good is it ever likely to do you, either in this world, or in the world to come? And why are you so violent against those that hope for a deliverance from it! Have patience with us, if we are in an error: yea, suffer us to enjoy our error. If we should not attain it, the very expectation of this deliverance gives us present comfort. Yea, and ministers strength, to resist those enemies which we expect to conquer. If you could persuade us to despair of that victory we should give over the contest. Now *we are saved by hope:* from this very hope a degree of salvation springs. Be not angry at those who are

Felices errore suo:

Happy in their miſtake. Elſe be their opinion right or wrong, your temper is undeniably ſinful: bear then with *us*, as we do with *you:* and ſee whether the Lord will not deliver us? Whether he is not able yea, and willing to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God through him.

SERMON

SERMON LXXIX.

ON SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

1 JOHN v. 20.

This is the true God and eternal life.

IN this epistle St. *John* speaks, not to any particular Church, but to all the Christians of that age: although more especially to them among whom he then resided. And in them he speaks to the whole christian church, in all succeeding ages.

2. In this letter, or rather tract, (for he was pressed with those, to whom it was more immediately directed, probably being not able to preach to them any longer, because of his extreme old age,) he does not treat directly of faith, which St. *Paul* had done; neither of inward and outward holiness, concerning which both St. *Paul*, St. *James*, and St. *Peter* had spoken: but of the foundation of all, the happy and holy communion which

which the faithful have with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

3. Inthe preface, he deſcribes the authority, by which he wrote and ſpoke, chap. i. ver. 1—4, and expreſsly points out the deſign of his preſent writing. To the preface exactly anſwers the concluſion of the epiſtle, more largely explaining the ſame deſign, and recapitulating the marks of our communion with God, by, *we know*, thrice repeated, chap. v. ver. 18, 19, 20.

4. The tract itſelf treats,

Firſt, Severally, Of communion with the Father, chap. i. ver. 5—10. Of communion with the Son, chap. ii. and iii. Of communion with the Spirit, chap. iv.

Secondly, Conjointly of the teſtimony of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, on which, faith in Chriſt, the being born of God, love to God and his children, the keeping his commandments, and victory over the world, are founded, chap. v. ver. 1——12.

5. The recapitulation begins, chap. v. ver. 18. "We know that he who is born of God," who ſees and loves God, *ſinneth not*, ſo long as this loving faith abideth in him. "We know we are of God," children of God, by the witneſs and fruit of the ſpirit: "and the whole world," all who have not the ſpirit, "lieth in the wicked one." They are, and live, and dwell in him, as the children of God do in the Holy One. "We know, that the Son of God is come; and hath given us a *ſpiritual* underſtanding, that we may know the true one," the faithful and true witneſs. "And we

we are in the true one," as branches in the vine. "This is the true God and eternal life.

In considering these important words, we may enquire,

First, How is he the true God?

Secondly, How is he eternal life? I shall then, in the third place, add a few inferences.

I. And first we may enquire, How is he the true God? He is "God over all, blessed for ever. He was with God," with God the Father, "from the beginning," from eternity, *and was God.* "He and the Father are one;" and consequently "he thought it no robbery to be equal with God." Accordingly, the inspired writers give him all the titles of the most high God. They call him, over and over, by the incommunicable name, JEHOVAH, never given to any creature. They ascribe to him all the attributes, and all the works of God. So that we need not scruple to pronounce him God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God: in glory equal with the Father, in Majesty coeternal.

2. He is *the true God*, the only cause, the sole Creator of all things. "*By him*," saith the Apostle *Paul*, "Were created all things that are in heaven, and that are on earth:" yea, earth and heaven themselves: but the inhabitants are named, because more noble than the house, *visible* and *invisible*. The several species of which are subjoined: "Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." So St. *John*, "All things were made by him, and without him was

not

not any thing made that was made." And accordingly St. *Paul* applies to him those strong words of the Pſalmiſt, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands."

3. And as *the true God*, he is alſo the *Supporter* of all the things that he hath made. He *ſtayeth*, upholdeth, ſuſtaineth *all* created "things by the word of his power," by the ſame powerful word, which brought them out of nothing. As this was abſolutely neceſſary for the beginning of their exiſtence, it is equally ſo, for the continuance of it: were his almighty influence withdrawn, they could not ſubſiſt a moment longer. Hold up a ſtone in the air; the moment you withdraw your hand, it naturally falls to the ground. In like manner, were he to withdraw his hand for a moment, the creation would fall into nothing.

4. As *the true God*, he is likewiſe the *Preſerver* of all things. He not only keeps them in being, but preſerves them in that degree of well-being, which is ſuitable to their ſeveral natures. He preſerves them in their ſeveral relations, connections and dependences, ſo as to compoſe one ſyſtem of beings, to form one entire univerſe, according to the counſel of his will. How ſtrongly and beautifully is this expreſſed? τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε "By whom all things conſiſt;" or, more literally, "By and in him are all things compacted into one ſyſtem." He is not only the ſupport, but alſo the cement of the whole univerſe.

5. I would particularly remark, (what perhaps has not been ſufficiently obſerved) that he is the true *Author of all* the *motion* that is in the univerſe. To ſpirits, indeed, he has given a ſmall degree of

of ſelf-moving power, but not to matter. All matter, of whatever kind it be, is abſolutely and totally inert. It does not, cannot in any caſe move itſelf; and whenever any part of it ſeems to move, it is in reality moved by ſomething elſe. See that log, which, vulgarly ſpeaking, *moves* on the ſea! It is in reality *moved* by the water. The water is moved by the wind, that is, a current of air. And the air itſelf owes all its motion, to the ethereal fire, a particle of which is attached to every particle of it. Deprive it of that fire, and it moves no longer: it is fixt; it is as inert as ſand. Remove fluidity (owing to the ethereal fire intermixt with it) from water, and it has no more motion than the log. Impact fire into iron, by hammering it when red hot, and it has no more motion than fixt air, or frozen water. But when it is unfixt, when it is in its moſt active ſtate, what gives motion to fire? The very heathen will tell you: It is,

Magnam Mens agitans molem, & vaſto ſe corpore miſcens.

6. To purſue this a little farther. We ſay, the moon moves round the earth, the earth and the other planets move round the ſun, the ſun moves round its own axis. But theſe are only vulgar expreſſions. For if we ſpeak the truth, neither the ſun, moon, nor ſtars *move*. None of theſe move themſelves. They are all *moved* every moment by the Almighty hand that made them.

"Yes, ſays Sir *Iſaac*, the ſun, moon, and all the heavenly bodies do move, do *gravitate* toward each other." Gravitate! What is that? "Why, they all *attract* each other, in proportion to the quantity of matter they contain." Nonſenſe all over,"

over," says Mr. *Hutchinson*: Jargon! Self-contradiction! Can any thing *act, where it is not?* No, they are continually *impelled* toward each other. Impelled, by what? "By the subtil matter, the ether or electric fire." But remember! Be it ever so subtil, it is matter still. Consequently it is as inert in itself as either sand or marble. It cannot therefore move itself: but probably it is the first material mover, the main spring whereby the Creator and Preserver of all things is pleased to move the universe.

7. *The true God* is also the *Redeemer* of all the children of men. It pleased the Father to "lay upon him the iniquities of us all," that by the one oblation of himself once offered, when he tasted death for every man, he might make a full and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

8. Again. The true God is *the Governor* of all things: *his kingdom ruleth over all. The government* rests *upon his shoulders*, throughout all ages. He is the Lord and Disposer of the whole creation, and every part of it. And in how astonishing a manner does he govern the world! How far are his ways above human thought! How little do we know of his methods of government? Only this we know, "*Ita præsides singulis sicut universis, & universis sitat singulis!*" Thou presidest over each creature, as if it were the universe, and over the universe as over each individual creature. Dwell a little upon this sentiment: what a glorious mystery does it contain. It is paraphrased in the words recited above.

Father how wide thy glories shine!
Lord of the universe—and mine:

Thy

Thy goodneſs watches o'er the whole,
As all the world were but one ſoul:
Yet keeps my every ſacred hair,
As I remained thy ſingle care!

9. And yet there is a difference as was ſaid before in his providential government over the children of men. A pious writer obſerves, There is a three-fold circle of divine providence. The *outermoſt circle* includes all the ſons of men, Heathens, Mahometans, Jews and Chriſtians. He cauſeth his ſun to riſe upon all. He giveth them rain and fruitful ſeaſons. He pours ten thouſand benefits upon them, and fills their hearts with food and gladneſs. With an *interior circle*, he encompaſſes the whole viſible Chriſtian Church, all that name the name of Chriſt. He has an additional regard to theſe, and a nearer attention to their welfare. But the innermoſt circle of his providence, encloſes only the inviſible Church of Chriſt; all real Chriſtians, wherever diſperſed in all corners of the earth: all that worſhip God (whatever denomination they are of) in ſpirit and in truth. He keeps theſe as the apple of an eye: he hides them under the ſhadow of his wings. And it is to theſe in particular that our Lord ſays, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."

10. Laſtly, Being *the true God*, he is *the end* of all things, according to that ſolemn declaration of the Apoſtle, (Rom. xi. 36.) "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:" *of him* as the Creator; *through him*, as the Suſtainer and Preſerver, and *to him*, as the ultimate end of all.

II. In all these senses, Jesus Christ is *the true God.* But how is he *Eternal Life?*

1. The thing directly intended in this expression, is not that he *will be* eternal life: although this is a great and important truth, and never to be forgotten. "He is the author of eternal salvation, to all them that obey him." He is the purchaser of that *crown of life*, which will be given to all that are *faithful unto death.* And he will be the soul of all their joys to all the saints in glory.

The flame of angelical love
Is kindled at Jesus's face;
And all the enjoyment above
Consists in the rapturous gaze!

2. The thing directly intended is not, That he is the resurrection: although this also is true, according to his own declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life:" agreeable to which are St. *Paul's* words, "As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." So that we may well say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

3. But waving what he *will be* hereafter, we are here called to consider, what he *is now.* He is now the life of every thing that lives in any kind or degree. He is the source of the lowest species of life, that of *vegetables;* as being the source of all the motion, on which vegetation depends. He is the fountain of the life of *animals*, the power by which the heart beats, and the circulating

circulating juices flow. He is the fountain of all the life which man poſſeſſes, in common with other animals. And if we diſtinguiſh the *rational* from the animal life, he is the ſource of this alſo.

4. But how infinitely ſhort does all this fall of the life which is here directly intended? And of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks ſo explicitly in the preceding verſes? (ver. 11, 12.) "This is the teſtimony, that God *hath* given us eternal life: and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son *hath* life, (the eternal life here ſpoken of,) And he that hath not the Son of God, hath not this life." As if he had ſaid, *This is* the ſum of *the teſtimony which God hath* teſtified *of his Son, that God* hath *given us*, not only a title to, but the real beginning of *eternal life. And this life is* purchaſed by, and treaſured up *in his Son:* who has all the ſprings and the fulneſs of it in himſelf, to communicate to his body, the Church.

5. This eternal life commences, when it pleaſes the Father to reveal his Son in our hearts: when we firſt know Chriſt, being enabled to "call him Lord by the Holy Ghoſt:" when we can teſtify, our conſcience bearing us witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, "the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." And then it is that happineſs begins, happineſs real, ſolid, ſubſtantial. Then it is that heaven is opened in the ſoul, that the proper, heavenly ſtate commences, while the love of God, as loving us, is ſhed abroad in the heart, inſtantly producing love to all mankind; general, pure benevolence, together with its genuine fruits, lowlineſs, meekneſs, patience, contentedneſs in every ſtate: an entire, clear, full acquieſcence in the

whole will of God, enabling us to "rejoice evermore, and in every thing to give thanks."

6. As our knowledge and our love of him increafe, by the fame degrees, and in the fame proportion, the kingdom of an inward heaven, muft neceffarily increafe alfo; while we "grow up in all things into him, who is our head." And when we are Ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, *complete in him*, as our tranflators render it: but more properly, when we are *filled with him*, when "Chrift in us the hope of glory," is our God and our All, when he has taken the full poffeffion of our heart: when he reigns therein without a rival, the Lord of every motion there: when we dwell in Chrift, and Chrift in us, we are one with Chrift, and Chrift with us: then we are completely happy; then we live all "the life that is hid with Chrift in God." Then and not till then, we properly experience what that word meaneth "God is love; and whofoever dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."

III. I have now only to add a few inferences from the preceding obfervations.

1. And we may learn from hence, Firft, That as there is but one God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, fo there is only one happinefs for created fpirits, either in heaven or earth. This one God made our heart for himfelf; and it cannot reft, till it refteth in him. It is true, that while we are in the vigour of youth and health: while our blood dances in our veins: while the world fmiles upon us, and we have all the conveniences, yea, and fuperfluities of life: we frequently have pleafing dreams, and enjoy a kind of

of happineſs. But it cannot continue: it flies away like a ſhadow: and even while it does, it is not ſolid, or ſubſtantial: it does not ſatisfy the ſoul. We ſtill pant after ſomething elſe; ſomething which we have not. Give a man every thing that this world can give, ſtill, as *Horace* obſerved near two thouſand years ago,

Curtæ neſcio quid Semper abeſt rei.

Still

"Amidſt our plenty ſomething ſtill
To me, to thee, to him is wanting!"

That *ſom thing*, is neither more nor leſs, than the knowledge and love of God: without which no ſpirit can be happy, either in heaven or earth.

2. Permit me to cite my own experience, in confirmation of this: I diſtinctly remember, that even in my childhood, even when I was at ſchool, I have often ſaid, "They ſay, the life of a ſchool-boy is the happieſt in the world: but I am ſure, I am not happy. For I am not content, and ſo cannot be happy." When I had lived a few years longer, being in the vigour of youth, a ſtranger to pain and ſickneſs, and particularly to lowneſs of ſpirits, (which I do not remember to have felt one quarter of an hour ever ſince I was born:) having plenty of all things, in the midſt of ſenſible and amiable friends, who loved me, and I loved them, and being in the way of life, which of all others, ſuited my inclinations; ſtill I was not happy! I wondered why I was not, and could not imagine, what the reaſon was? The reaſon

certainly was, I did not know God: the fource of preſent as well as eternal happineſs. What is a clear proof that I was not then happy, is, that upon the cooleſt reflection, I knew not one week which I would have thought it worth while to have lived over again; taking it with every inward and outward ſenſation, without any variation at all.

3. But a pious man affirms, "When I was young, I was happy, though I was utterly without God in the world." I do not believe you: though I doubt not but you believe yourſelf. But you are deceived, as I have been over and over. Such is the condition of human life!

"Flowrets and myrtles fragrant ſeem to riſe;
All is at diſtance fair; but near at hand,
The gay deceit mocks the deſiring eyes
With thorns, and deſert-heath, and barren ſands."

Look forward on any diſtant proſpect! how beautiful does it appear: Come up to it; and the beauty vaniſhes away, and it is rough and diſagreeable. Juſt ſo is life! But when the ſcene is paſt, it reſumes its former appearance: and we ſeriouſly believe, that we were then very happy, though in reality we were far otherwiſe. For as none is now, ſo none ever was happy, without the loving knowledge of the true God.

4. We may learn hence, Secondly, That this happy knowledge of the true God is only another name for *religion*: I mean *Chriſtian religion*, which indeed is the only one that deſerves the name. Religion, as to the nature or eſſence of it, does not lie in this or that ſet of notions, vulgarly called

led *faith*: nor in a round of duties, however carefully *reformed* from error and superstition. It does not consist in any number of outward actions. No: it properly and directly consists in the knowledge and love of God, as manifested in the Son of his love, through the eternal Spirit. And this naturally leads to every heavenly temper, and to every good word and work.

5. We learn hence, Thirdly, That none but a Christian is happy; none but a real, inward Christian. A glutton, a drunkard, a gamester may be *merry*: but he cannot be happy. The Beau, the Belle, may eat and drink, and rise up to play; but still they feel they are not happy. Men or women may adorn their own dear persons with all the colours of the rainbow. They may dance and sing, and hurry to and fro, and flutter hither and thither. They may roll up and down in their splendid carriages, and talk insipidly to each other. They may hasten from one diversion to another: but happiness is not there. They are still "walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting themselves in vain." One of their own Poets has truly pronounced, concerning the whole life of these sons of pleasure,

> "'Tis a dull farce, an empty show:
> Powder, and pocket-glass, and beau."

I cannot but observe of that fine Writer, that he came near the mark: and yet fell short of it. In his *Solomon* (one of the noblest poems in the English tongue,) he clearly shews where happiness *is not*: that it is not to be found in natural knowledge, in power, or in the pleasures of sense or imagination. But he does not shew where it is to

be

be found. He could not; for he did not know it himself. Yet he came near it, when he said,

"Restore, Great Father, thy instructed son:
And in my act may thy great will be done!"

6. We learn hence, Fourthly, That every Christian is happy, and that he who is not happy is not a Christian. If (as was observed above) religion is happiness, every one that has it must be happy. This appears from the very nature of the thing: for if religion and happiness are in fact the same, it is impossible that any man can possess the former, without possessing the latter also. He cannot have religion without having happiness, seeing they are utterly inseparable.

And it is equally certain, on the other hand, That he who is not happy, is not a Christian: seeing if he was a real Christian, he could not but be happy. But I allow an exception here; in favour of those, who are under temptation; yea, and of those who are under deep nervous disorders, which are indeed a species of insanity. The clouds and darkness which then overwhelm the soul, suspend its happiness: especially if Satan is permitted to second those disorders, by pouring in his fiery darts. But excepting these cases, the observation will hold, and it should be well attended to, whoever is not happy, yea happy in God, is not a Christian.

7. Are not *you* a living proof of this? Do not you still wander to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none? Pursuing happiness, but never overtaking it? And who can blame you for pursuing it? It is the very end of your being. The great Creator made nothing to be miserable, but every creature

creature to be happy in its kind. And upon a general review of the works of his hands he pronounced them all *very good:* which they would not have been, had not every intelligent creature, yea, every one capable of pleasure and pain, been happy in answering the end of its creation. If *you* are now unhappy, it is because you are in an unnatural state: and shall you not sigh for deliverance from it? *The whole creation* being now *subject to vanity, groaneth and travaileth in pain together.* I blame you only, or pity you rather, for taking a wrong way to a right end: for seeking happiness where it never was, and never can be found. You seek happiness in your fellow-creatures, instead of your Creator. But these can no more make you happy, than they can make you immortal. If you have ears to hear, every creature cries aloud, "Happiness is not *in me.*" All these are, in truth, "broken cisterns, that can hold no water." O turn unto your rest! Turn unto him, in whom are hid all the treasures of happiness! Turn unto him, "who giveth liberally unto all men," and he will give you "to drink of the water of life freely."

8. You cannot find your long-sought happiness in all the "pleasures of the world." Are they not "deceitful upon the weights?" Are they not "lighter than vanity itself?" How long will ye "feed upon that which is not bread?" Which may *amuse*, but cannot satisfy. You cannot find it in the *religion of the world:* either in opinions, or a mere round of outward duties. Vain labour! Is not *God a Spirit?* And therefore to be "worshipped in spirit and in truth?" In this alone can you find the happiness you seek: in the union of your spirit with the Father of spirits.

In

In the knowledge and love of him who is the fountain of happineſs, ſufficient for all the ſouls he has made.

9. But where is he to be found? Shall we "go up into heaven, or down into hell" to ſeek him? Shall we "take the wings of the morning," and ſearch for him "in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea?" Nay,

Quod petis, hic eſt!

What a ſtrange word, to fall from the pen of a Heathen? "What you ſeek, is here!" He is *about your bed!* He is *about your path.* He *beſets you behind and before.* He *lays his hand upon you.* Lo! God is here! Not afar off! Now, believe and feel him near! May he now reveal himſelf in your heart! Know him! Love him! and you are happy.

10. Are you already happy in him? Then ſee that you "hold faſt whereunto ye have obtained!" "Watch and pray," that you may never be "moved from your ſtedfaſtneſs. Look unto yourſelves, that you loſe not what you have gained, but that ye receive a full reward." In ſo doing, expect a continual growth in grace, in the loving knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Expect that the power of the Higheſt ſhall ſuddenly overſhadow you, that all ſin may be deſtroyed, and nothing may remain in your heart, but holineſs unto the Lord. And this moment, and every moment, "preſent yourſelves a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and glorify him with your body and with your ſpirit, which are God's."

SERMON

SERMON LXXX.

SPIRITUAL IDOLATRY.

1 JOHN v. 21.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

1 THERE are two words that occur several times in this Epistle, παιδία and τεκνία, both of which our translators render by the same expression, *little children*. But their meaning is very different. The former is very properly rendered *little children*: for it means, *Babes in Christ*, those that have lately tasted of his love, and are as yet weak and unestablished therein. The latter might with more propriety be rendered, *Beloved children*; as it does not denote any more than the affection of the speaker to those whom he had begotten in the Lord.

2. An

2. An ancient Hiſtorian relates, that when the Apoſtle was ſo enfeebled by age, as not to be able to preach, he was frequently brought into the congregation in his chair, and juſt uttered, "Beloved children, love one another." He could not have given a more important advice. And equally important is this which lies before us; equally neceſſary for every part of the Church of Chriſt. "Beloved children, keep yourſelves from idols."

3. Indeed there is a cloſe connection between them: one cannot ſubſiſt without the other. As there is no firm foundation for the love of our brethren, except the love of God, ſo there is no poſſibility of loving God, except we *keep* ourſelves *from idols*.

But what are the *idols* of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks? This is the firſt thing to be conſidered. We may then, in the ſecond place enquire, how ſhall we keep ourſelves from them?

I. 1. We are firſt to conſider, What are the idols of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks? I do not conceive him to mean, at leaſt not principally, the idols that were worſhipped by the Heathens. They to whom he was writing, whether they had been Jews or Heathens, were not in much danger from theſe. There is no probability, that the Jews now converted, had ever been guilty of worſhipping them: as deeply given to this groſs idolatry as the Iſraelites had been for many ages, they were hardly ever entangled therein, after their return from the Babyloniſh captivity. From that period the whole body of Jews had ſhewn a conſtant, deep abhorrence of it: and the Heathens, after they had once turned to the living God, had their former idols in the utmoſt deteſtation. They abhorred to touch the unclean thing; yea they choſe

chose to lay down their lives, rather than turn to the worship of those gods, whom they now knew to be devils.

2. Neither can we reasonably suppose, that he speaks of those idols, that are now worshipped in the Church of *Rome*: whether angels, or the souls of departed saints, or images of gold, silver, wood or stone. None of these idols were known in the Christian Church, till some centuries after the time of the Apostles. Once indeed, St. *John* himself, "fell down to worship before the face of an angel" that spake unto him: probably mistaking him, from his glorious appearance, for the great Angel of the Covenant. But the strong reproof of the angel, which immediately followed, secured the Christians from imitating that bad example. *See thou do it not:* as glorious as I appear, I am not thy Master. "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets: worship God." Rev. xxii. 9.

3. Setting then Pagan and Romish idols aside, what are those of which we are here warned by the Apostle? The preceding words shew us the meaning of these. "This is the true God;" the end of all the souls he has made; the centre of all created spirits: *and eternal life*, the only foundation of present as well as eternal happiness. To him therefore alone our heart is due. And he cannot, he will not quit his claim, or consent to its being given to any other. He is continually saying to every child of man, "My son, give me thy heart!" And to give our heart to any other is plain idolatry. Accordingly whatever takes our heart from him, or shares it with him, is an idol: or, in other words, whatever we seek happiness in, independent of God.

4. Take an inſtance that occurs almoſt every day. A perſon who has been long involved in the world, ſurrounded and fatigued with abundance of buſineſs, having at length acquired an eaſy fortune, diſengages himſelf from all buſineſs, and retires into the country——to be happy. Happy in what? Why, in taking his eaſe. For he intends now,

——— *Somno & inertibus horis*
Ducere ſollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ.

———To ſleep, and paſs away,
In gentle inactivity the day!

Happy, in eating and drinking whatever his heart deſires: perhaps more elegant fare, than that of the old *Roman*, who feaſted his imagination before the treat was ſerved up: who, before he left the town, conſoled himſelf with the thought of "fat bacon and cabbage too!"

Uncta ſatis pingui ponentur oluſcula lardo!

Happy—in altering, enlarging, rebuilding, or at leaſt decorating, the old manſion-houſe he has purchaſed: and likewiſe in improving every thing about it, the ſtables, out-houſes, grounds. But mean time where does God come in? No where at all. He did not think about him. He no more thought of the King of Heaven, than of the King of *France*. God is not in his plan. The knowledge and love of God are entirely out of the queſtion. Therefore this whole ſcheme of happineſs in retirement is idolatry from beginning to end.

5. If

5. If we descend to particulars, the first species of this idolatry is what St. *John* terms, "the desire of the flesh:" we are apt to take this in too narrow a meaning, as if it related to one of the senses only. Not so: this expression equally refers to all the outward senses. It means, the seeking happiness in the gratification of any, or all of the external senses: although more particularly of the three lower senses, tasting, smelling and feeling. It means, the seeking happiness herein, if not in a gross, indelicate manner, by open intemperance, by gluttony or drunkenness, or shameless debauchery: yet, in a regular kind of epicurism, in a genteel sensuality, in such an elegant course of self-indulgence, as does not disorder either the head or the stomach, as does not at all impair our health, or blemish our reputation.

6. But we must not imagine this species of idolatry is confined to the rich and great. In this also, "the toe of the peasant, (as our Poet speaks) treads upon the heel of the courtier." Thousands in low as well as in high life, sacrifice to this idol: seeking their happiness (though in a more humble manner) in gratifying their outward senses. It is true, their meat, their drink, and the objects that gratify their other senses are of a coarser kind. But still they make up all the happiness they either have or seek, and usurp the hearts which are due to God.

7. The second species of idolatry mentioned by the Apostle, is *the desire of the eye*, that is, the seeking happiness in gratifying the imagination: (chiefly by means of the eyes) that internal sense, which is as natural to men as either sight or hearing. This is gratified by such objects, as are either

grand, or beautiful or uncommon. But as to grand objects, it seems they do not please any longer than they are new. Were we to survey the Pyramids of Egypt daily for a year, what pleasure would they then give? Nay, what pleasure does a far grander object than these,

"The ocean rolling on the shelly shore,"

give to one who has been long accustomed to it? yea, what pleasure do we generally receive from the grandest object in the universe,

"Yon ample, azure sky,
Terribly large, and wonderfully bright,
With stars unnumbered and unmeasured light?"

8. Beautiful objects are the next general source of the pleasures of the imagination: the works of nature in particular. So persons in all ages have been delighted

"With sylvan scenes, and hill and dale,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams."

Others are pleased with adding art to nature, as in gardens, with their various ornaments: others with mere works of art, as buildings, and representations of nature, whether in statues or paintings. Many likewise find pleasure in beautiful *apparel* or *furniture* of various kinds. But novelty must be added to beauty, as well as grandeur, or it soon palls upon the sense.

9. Are we to refer to the head of beauty, the pleasure which many take in a *favourite animal?* Suppose a sparrow, a parrot, a cat, a lap-dog? Sometimes

Sometimes it may be owing to this. At other times none but the perſon pleaſed can find any beauty at all in the favourite. Nay, perchance it is in the eye of all other perſons, ſuperlatively ugly. In this caſe, the pleaſure ſeems to ariſe from mere whim or caprice; that is, madneſs.

10. Muſt we not refer to the head of novelty chiefly, the pleaſure found in moſt *diverſions* and *amuſements*; which, were we to repeat them daily but a few months, would be utterly flat and inſipid? To the ſame head, we may refer the pleaſure that is taken, in *collecting curioſities*; whether they are natural or artificial; whether old or new. This ſweetens the labour of the virtuoſo, and makes all his labour light.

11. But it is not chiefly to novelty, that we are to impute the pleaſure we receive from *muſic*. Certainly this has an intrinſic beauty, as well as frequently an intrinſic grandeur. This is a beauty and grandeur of a peculiar kind, not eaſy to be expreſt: nearly related to the ſublime and the beautiful in *poetry*, which give an exquiſite pleaſure. And yet it may be allowed that novelty heightens the pleaſure which ariſes from any of theſe ſources.

12. From the ſtudy of *languages*, from *criticiſm*, and from *hiſtory*, we receive a pleaſure of a mixt nature. In all theſe, there is always ſomething new: frequently ſomething beautiful or ſublime. And hiſtory not only gratifies the imagination in all theſe reſpects, but likewiſe pleaſes us by touching our paſſions, our love, deſire, joy, pity. The laſt of theſe gives us a ſtrong pleaſure, though ſtrangely mixt with a kind of pain. So that we need not wonder at the exclamation of a fine Poet,

"What is all mirth but turbulence unholy,
When to the charms compared of heavenly melancholy?"

13. The love of novelty is immeasurably gratified by *experimental Philosophy*: and indeed by every branch of *Natural Philosophy*, which opens an immense field for still new discoveries. But is there not likewise a pleasure therein, as well as in *mathematical* and *metaphysical* studies, which does not result from the imagination, but from the exercise of the understanding? Unless we will say, that the newness of the discoveries which we make by mathematical, or metaphysical researches, is one reason at least, if not the chief, of the pleasure we receive therefrom.

14. I dwell the longer on these things, because so very few see them in the true point of view. The generality of men, and more particularly, men of sense and learning, are so far from suspecting, that there is, or can be the least harm in them, that they seriously believe, it is a matter of great praise, to "give ourselves wholly to them." Who of them, for instance, would not admire and commend the indefatigable industry of that great Philosopher, who says, "I have been now eight and thirty years at my parish of *Upmanster*, and I have made it clear, that there are no less than three and fifty species of butterflies therein. But if God should spare my life a few years longer, I do not doubt but I should demonstrate, there are five and fifty!" I allow, that most of these studies have their use, and that it is possible to *use*, without *abusing* them. But if we seek our happiness in any of these things, then it commences an *idol*. And the enjoyment of it, however

however it may be admired and applauded by the world, is condemned by God as neither better nor worse than damnable *idolatry*.

15. The third kind of *love of the world*, the Apostle speaks of under that uncommon expression, ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου. This is rendered by our translators, *The pride of life*. It is usually supposed to mean, the pomp and splendor of those that are in high life. But has it not a more extensive sense? Does it not rather mean, the seeking happiness in the praise of men, which above all things engenders pride? When this is pursued in a more pompous way, by kings, or illustrious men, we call it thirst for glory: when it is sought in a lower way by ordinary men, it is stiled, Taking care of our reputation. In plain terms, it is seeking the honour that cometh of men, instead of that which *cometh of God only*.

16. But what creates a difficulty here is this, we are required, not only to "give no offence to any one, *and to* provide things honest in the sight of all men, *but to* please all men for their good to edification." But how difficult is it to do this, with a single eye to God? We ought to do all that in us lies, to prevent "the good that is in us from being evil spoken of." Yea, we ought to value a clear reputation, if it be given us, only less than a good conscience. But yet, if we seek our happiness therein, we are liable to perish in our idolatry.

17. To which of the preceding heads is the *love of money* to be referred? Perhaps sometimes to one, and sometimes to another, as it is a means of procuring gratifications, either for "the desire of the flesh, for the desire of the eyes, or for the pride of life." In any of these cases, money is only

only purſued, in order to a farther end. But it is ſometimes purſued for its own ſake, without any farther view. One who is properly a miſer, loves and ſeeks money for its own ſake. He looks no farther, but places his happineſs in the acquiring or the poſſeſſing of it. And this is a ſpecies of idolatry, diſtant from all the preceding; and indeed the loweſt, baſeſt idolatry, of which the human ſoul is capable. To ſeek happineſs either in gratifying this, or any other of the deſires abovementioned, is effectually to renounce the true God, and to ſet up an idol in his place. In a word, ſo many objects as there are in the world, wherein men ſeek happineſs inſtead of ſeeking it in God, ſo many *idols* they ſet up in their hearts; ſo many ſpecies of *idolatry* they practice.

18. I would take notice of only one more, which, though it in ſome meaſure falls in with ſeveral of the preceding, yet in many reſpects is diſtinct from them all, I mean, the idolizing an human creature. Undoubtedly it is the will of God that we ſhould all love one another. It is his will, that we ſhould love our relations and our Chriſtian brethren with a peculiar love: and thoſe in particular, whom he has made particularly profitable to our ſouls. Theſe we are commanded to *love fervently*: yet ſtill *with a pure heart*. But is not this *impoſſible with man?* To retain the ſtrength and tenderneſs of affection, and yet, without any ſtain to the ſoul, with unſpotted purity? I do not mean only unſpotted by luſt. I know, this is poſſible. I know a perſon may have an unutterable affection for another, without any deſire of this kind. But is it without idolatry? Is it not loving the creature more than the Creator? Is it not putting a man or woman in the place of God?

God? Giving them your heart? Let this be carefully conſidered, even by thoſe whom God has joined together; by huſbands and wives, parents and children. It cannot be denied, that theſe ought to love one another tenderly: they are commanded ſo to do. But they are neither commanded nor permitted, to love one another idolatrouſly! Yet how common is this? How frequently is a huſband, a wife, a child, put in the place of God? How many that are accounted good Chriſtians, fix their affections on each other, ſo as to leave no place for God? They ſeek their happineſs in the creature, not in the Creator. One may truly ſay to the other,

"I view thee, Lord and End of my deſires."

That is, "I deſire nothing more but thee! Thou art the thing that I long for! All my deſire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name." Now, if this is not flat idolatry, I cannot tell what is!

II. Having largely conſidered, What thoſe *idols* are, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, I come now to enquire, (which may be done more briefly) how we may *keep ourſelves from them?*

1. In order to this, I would adviſe you firſt, Be deeply convinced that none of them bring happineſs; that no thing, no perſon under the ſun, no, nor the amaſſment of all together, can give any ſolid, ſatisfactory happineſs to any child of man. The world itſelf, the giddy, thoughtleſs world, acknowledge this unawares, while they allow, nay, vehemently maintain, "No man upon earth is contented." The very ſame obſervation was made, near two thouſand years ago.

Nemo

Nemo quam sibi sortem
Seu ratio dederit, seu fors abjecerit, illâ
Contentus vivat.

Let Fortune, or let Choice the station give
To man, yet none on earth contented live.

And if no man upon earth is contented, it is certain, no man is happy. For whatever station we are in, discontent is incompatible with happiness.

2. Indeed not only the giddy, but the thinking part of the world, allow, That no man is contented: the melancholy proofs of which we see on every side, in high and low, rich and poor. And generally, the more understanding they have, the more discontented they are. For,

"They know with more distinction to complain,
And have superior sense, in feeling pain."

It is true, every one has (to use the cant term of the day; and an excellent one it is,) *his Hobby-horse!* Something that pleases the great boy for a few hours or days, and wherein he *hopes* to be happy! But though

"Hope blooms eternal in the human breast,
Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

Still he is walking in a vain shadow, which will soon vanish away! So that universal experience, both our own, and that of all our friends and acquaintance, clearly proves, that as God made our hearts for himself, so they cannot rest till they rest in him: that till we *acquaint* ourselves with him, we cannot be at peace. As *a*

corner

ſcorner of the wiſdom of God, "ſeeketh wiſdom and findeth it not:" ſo a ſcorner of happineſs in God, ſeeketh happineſs, but findeth none.

3. When you are thoroughly convinced of this, I adviſe you, Secondly, Stand and conſider what you are about? Will you be a fool and a madman all your days? Is it not high time to come to your ſenſes? At length, awake out of ſleep, and ſhake yourſelf from the duſt! Break looſe from this miſerable idolatry, and *chuſe the better part.* Steadily reſolve, to ſeek happineſs where it may be found, where it cannot be ſought in vain. Reſolve to ſeek it in the true God, the fountain of all bleſſedneſs! And cut off all delay. Straightway put in execution what you have reſolved! Seeing "all things are ready, Acquaint thyſelf now with him, and be at peace."

4. But do not either reſolve or attempt to execute your reſolution, truſting in your own ſtrength. If you do, you will be utterly foiled. You are not able to contend with the evil world; much leſs with your own evil heart, and leaſt of all, with the powers of darkneſs. Cry therefore to the Strong for ſtrength. Under a deep ſenſe of your own weakneſs and helpleſſneſs, *truſt* thou "in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength." I adviſe you to cry to him for repentance in particular, not only for a full conſciouſneſs of your own impotence, but for a piercing ſenſe of the exceeding guilt, baſeneſs, and madneſs of the idolatry that has long ſwallowed you up: cry for a thorough knowledge of yourſelf, of all your ſinfulneſs and guiltineſs. Pray that you may be fully diſcovered to yourſelf, that you may know yourſelf as alſo you are known. When once you are poſſeſſed of this genuine conviction, all

all your idols will lose their charms. And you will wonder, how you could so long lean upon those broken reeds, which had so often sunk under you.

5 What should you ask for next?

"Jesus, now I have lost my All,
Let me upon thy bosom fall!"

Now let me see thee in thy vesture dipt in blood!

Now stand in all thy wounds confest,
And wrap me in thy crimson vest!

Hast thou not said, "If thou canst believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" Lord, *I would* believe! *Help thou mine unbelief!* And help me *now!* Help me now to enter into that rest that remaineth for the people of God! For those who give thee their heart, their whole heart! Who receive thee as their God and their all! O thou that art fairer than the children of men, full of grace are thy lips! Speak that I may see thee! And as the shadows flee before the sun, so let all my idols vanish at thy presence!

6. From the moment that you begin to experience this, fight the good fight of faith: take the kingdom of heaven by violence! Take it as it were by storm. Deny yourself every pleasure that you are not divinely conscious brings you nearer to God. Take up your cross daily; regard no pain, if it lies in your way to him. If you are called thereto, scruple not to pluck out the right eye and to cast it from you. Nothing is impossible to him that believeth: you can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth you. Do valiantly

valiantly and ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free. Yea, go on, in his name and in the power of his might, till you "know all that love of God that paſſeth knowledge." And then you have only to wait till he ſhall call you into his everlaſting kingdom!

SERMON LXXXI.

ON DISSIPATION.

1 CORINTHIANS vii. 35.

This I speak—that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

1. ALMOST in every part of our nation, more especially in the large and populous towns, we hear a general complaint among sensible persons, of the still increasing *Dissipation*. It is observed to diffuse itself more and more in the court, the city, and the country. From the continual mention which is made of this, and the continual declamations against it, one would naturally imagine that a word so commonly used was perfectly understood. Yet it may be doubted whether it be or no. Nay, we may very safely affirm, that few of those who frequently use the term, understand what it means. One reason of this is, that although the thing has been long among

among us, especially since the time of King *Charles* the Second, (one of the most dissipated mortals that ever breathed) yet the word is not of long standing. It was hardly heard of fifty years ago; and not much before the present reign. So lately has it been imported: and yet it is so in every one's mouth, that it is already worn thread-bare, being one of the cant-words of the day.

2. Another reason why it is so little understood may be, that among the numberless writers that swarm about us, there is not one, (at least whom I have seen) that has published so much as a six-penny pamphlet concerning it. We have indeed one short essay upon the subject: but exceeding few have seen it, as it stands in the midst of a volume of Essays, the author of which is little known in the world. And even this is so far from going to the bottom of the subject, that it only slightly glances over it; and does not so much as give us one definition of *Dissipation*, (which I looked narrowly for) from the beginning to the end.

3. We are accustomed to speak of Dissipation, as having respect chiefly, if not wholy to the outward behaviour; to the manner of life. But it is within, before it appears without: it is in the heart, before it is seen in the outward conversation. There must be a dissipated spirit, before there is a dissipated manner of life. But what is Dissipation of Spirit? This is the first and the grand enquiry.

4. God created all things for himself; more especially all intelligent spirits. (And indeed it seems that intelligence, in some kind or degree, is inseparable from spiritual beings; that intelligence is as essential to spirits, as extension is to matter.) He made those more directly for himself,

to know, love, and enjoy him. As the ſun is the centre of the Solar Syſtem, ſo (as far as we may compare material things with ſpiritual) we need not ſcruple to affirm, that God is the centre of ſpirits. And as long as they are united to him, created ſpirits are at reſt: they are at reſt ſo long, and no longer, as they "attend upon the Lord without diſtraction."

5. This expreſſion of the Apoſtle, (not to encumber ourſelves at preſent with the particular occaſion of his ſpeaking it) is exceeding peculiar: *προς το ευπρεδρον τω κυριω.* The word which we render *attend upon*, literally means, ſitting in a good poſture for hearing. And therein St. *Paul* undoubtedly alluded to *Mary* ſitting at the Maſter's feet, Luke x. 30. Mean time *Martha* was *cumbered* with much ſerving, was *diſtracted, diſſipated: περιεσπατο.* It is the very expreſſion from whence St. *Paul* takes the word which we render, *without diſtraction.*

6. And even as much ſerving diſſipated the thoughts of *Martha*, and diſtracted her from attending to her Lord's words, ſo a thouſand things which daily occur are apt to diſſipate our thoughts, and diſtract us from attending to his voice, who is continually ſpeaking to our hearts: I mean, to all that liſten to his voice. We are encompaſſed on all ſides with perſons and things, that tend to draw us from our centre. Indeed every creature, if we are not continually on our guard, will draw us from our Creator. The whole viſible world, all we ſee, hear or touch, all the objects either of our ſenſes or underſtanding, have a tendency to diſſipate our thoughts from the inviſible world, and to diſtract our minds from attending to him, who is both the author and end of our being.

7. This

7. This is the more eafily done, becaufe we are all by nature ἄθεοι, *Atheifts in the world*: and that in fo high a degree that it requires no lefs than Almighty Power, to counteract that tendency to to diffipation, which is in every human fpirit, and reftore the capacity of attending to God, and fixing itfelf on him. For this cannot be done, till we are new creatures, till we are created anew in Chrift Jefus, till the fame power which made the world, "make us a clean heart, and renew a right fpirit within us."

8. But who is he that is thus renewed? He that believeth in the name of the Son of God. He alone that believeth on the Lord Jefus Chrift is thus *born of God*. It is by this faith alone, that he is "created anew in or through Chrift Jefus," that he is reftored to the image of God, wherein he was created and again centered in God, or as the Apoftle expreffes it, "joined to the Lord in one fpirit." Yet even then the believer may find in himfelf, the remains of that *carnal mind*, that natural tendency to reft in created good, to acquiefce in vifible things, which without continual care will prefs down his foul, and draw him from his Creator. Herein the world, the men that know not God, will never fail to join at fometimes with delight, and at other times perhaps without delight: for their very fpirit is infectious, and infenfibly changes ours into its own likenefs. And we may be well affured, the prince of this world, the devil, will affift them with all his might. He will labour with all his ftrength, and what is ftill more dangerous, with all his fubtilty, if by any means he may draw us away from our "fimplicity towards Chrift," from our fimple adherence to him, from our union with him, through

whom we are alſo united in one ſpirit to the Father.

9. But nothing is more certain than this, that though he may tempt the ſtrongeſt believer, to give up his "ſimplicity toward Chriſt," and ſcatter his thoughts and deſires among worldly objects: yet he cannot force even the weakeſt; for the grace of God is ſtill ſufficient for him. The ſame grace which at firſt united him to God, is able to continue that happy union, in ſpite of all the rage, and all the ſtrength, and all the ſubtilty of the enemy. God has never left himſelf without witneſs, that he has power to deliver them that truſt in him, as out of every temptation that can aſſault them, ſo out of this in particular. He has ſtill a little flock, who do in fact "attend upon him without diſtraction:" who cleaving to him with full purpoſe, are not diſſipated from him, no not for a moment: but "rejoice evermore, pray without ceaſing, and in every thing give thanks."

10. But ſo far as any one yields to this temptation, ſo far he is *diſſipated*. The original word ſignifies to *diſperſe* or *ſcatter*. So the ſun diſſipates, that is, ſcatters the clouds; the wind diſſipates, or ſcatters the duſt. And by an eaſy metaphor, our thoughts are ſaid to be diſſipated, when they are irregularly ſcattered up and down. In like manner our deſires are diſſipated, when they are unhinged from God, their proper centre, and ſcattered to and fro among the poor, periſhing, unſatisfying things of the world. And indeed it may be ſaid of every man that is a ſtranger to the grace of God, that all his paſſions are diſſipated.

"Scattered o'er all the earth abroad,
Immeaſurably far from God."

11. *Diſtraction*,

11. *Diſtraction*, in St. Paul's ſenſe, is nearly alied to, or rather the ſame with Diſſipation: conſequently, to attend upon the Lord *without diſtraction*, is the ſame as to attend upon the Lord *without diſſipation*. But whenever the mind is unhinged from God, it is ſo far diſſipated or diſtracted. Diſſipation then in general may be defined, The uncentring the ſoul from God. And whatever uncentres the mind from God, does properly diſſipate us.

12. Hence we may eaſily learn, what is the proper, direct meaning of that common expreſſion, a *diſſipated man*. He is a man that is ſeparated from God, that is diſunited from his centre, whether this be occaſioned by hurry of buſineſs, by ſeeking honour or preferment, or by fondneſs for diverſions, for filly pleaſures to called, or for any trifle under the ſun. The vulgar, it is true, commonly confine this character to thoſe who are violently attached to women, gaming, drinking; to dancing, balls, races, or the poor, childiſh diverſion of "running foxes and hares out of breath." But it equally belongs to a ſerious fool who forgets God, by a cloſe attention to any worldly employment, ſuppoſe it were of the moſt elegant, or the moſt important kind. A man may be as much diſſipated from God, by the ſtudy of the Mathematicks or Aſtronomy, as by fondneſs for cards or hounds. Whoever is habitually inattentive to the preſence and will of his Creator, he is a *diſſipated* man.

13. Hence we may likewiſe learn, That a *diſſipated life* is not barely that of a powdered beau, or a petit-maitre, a gameſter, a woman-hunter, a playhouſe-hunter, a fox-hunter, or a ſhatterbrain of any kind, but the life of an honourable Statſ-

man

man, a Gentleman, or a Merchant, that is *without God in the world*. Agreeably to this, a *diſſipated age* (ſuch as is the preſent, perhaps beyond all that ever were, at leaſt that are recorded in hiſtory) is an age wherein God is generally forgotten. And a *diſſipated nation* (ſuch as *England* is at preſent in a ſuperlative degree) is a nation, a vaſt majority of which have not God *in all their thoughts*.

14. A plain conſequence of theſe obſervations is, (what ſome may eſteem a paradox) That *Diſſipation*, in the full, general meaning of the word, is the very ſame thing with *Ungodlineſs*. The name is new; but the thing is undoubtedly almoſt as old as the Creation. And this is at preſent the peculiar glory of *England*, wherein it is not equalled by any nation under heaven. We therefore ſpeak an unqueſtionable truth when we ſay, There is not on the face of the earth, another *nation* (at leaſt that we ever heard of) ſo perfectly *diſſipated* and *ungodly*: not only ſo totally without God in the world, but ſo openly ſetting him at defiance. There never was an *age* that we read of in hiſtory, ſince Julius Cæſar, ſince Noah, ſince Adam, wherein Diſſipation or Ungodlineſs did ſo generally prevail, both among high and low, rich and poor.

15. But ſtill, bleſſed be God!

> "All are not loſt! There be who faith prefer
> And piety to God!"

There are ſome, I truſt more than *ſeven thouſand*, yea, or ten times that number in England, *who have not* yet *bowed* either *their knee* or their heart, to the god of this world: who cleaving cloſe to the

the God of heaven, are not borne away by the flood, by the general, the almoſt univerſal torrent of Diſſipation or Ungodlineſs. They are not of the mind of gentle *Criſpus*.

Qui nunquam direxit brachia contra Torrentem:

"Who never attempted to ſwim againſt the ſtream." They dare ſwim againſt the ſtream. Each of them can truly ſay,

Non me, qui cætera vincit
Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi.

If they cannot turn the tide back, they can at leaſt bear an open teſtimony againſt it. They are therefore free from the blood of their ungodly countrymen: it muſt be upon their own head.

16. But by what means may we avoid the being carried away by the overflowing ſtream of *Diſſipation?* It is not difficult for thoſe who believe the ſcripture, to give an anſwer to this queſtion. Now I really believe the Bible to be the word of God: and on that ſuppoſition I anſwer, The radical cure of all diſſipation, is the *faith that worketh by love.* If therefore you would be free from this evil diſeaſe, firſt *continue ſtedfaſt in the faith:* In that *faith* which brings *the ſpirit of adoption, crying in your heart, Abba, Father;* whereby you are enabled to teſtify, *The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* By this faith you *ſee him that is inviſible, and ſet the Lord always before you.* Next *building yourſelves* up in your moſt holy faith, *keep yourſelves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,*

unto

unto everlasting life. And as long as you walk by this rule, you will be superior to all dissipation.

17. How exactly does this agree (though there is a difference in the expression) with that observation of pious *Kempis:* "Simplicity and purity are the two wings, which lift the soul up to heaven. Simplicity is in the intention, purity in the affection." For what is this but (in the Apostle's language) simple *faith working by love?* By that simplicity you always see God, and by purity you love him! What is it, but having (as one of the ancients speaks) "the loving eye of the soul fixt upon God? And as long as your soul is in this posture, dissipation can have no place.

18. It is with great judgment therefore that great and good Bishop *Taylor*, in his "Rules of Holy Living and Dying," (of whom Bishop *Warburton*, a person not very prone to commend, used to say, "I have no conception of a greater Genius on earth, than Dr. *Jeremiah Taylor*,") premises to all his other rules, those concerning purity of intention. And has he not the authority of our Lord himself so to do? who lays it down as an universal maxim, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Singly aim at God: in every step thou takest, eye him alone. Pursue one thing: happiness in knowing, in loving, in serving God. Then shall thy soul be full of light; full of the light of the glory of God, of his glorious love, shining upon thee from "the face of Jesus Christ."

19. Can any thing be a greater help to universal holiness, than the continually seeing the light of his glory? It is no wonder then that so many wise and good men have recommended, to

all

all who desire to be truly religious, The exercise of the presence of God. But in doing this, some of those holy men seem to have fallen into one mistake: (particularly, an excellent Writer of our own country, in his letters concerning "The Spirit of Prayer.") They put men wholly unawakened, unconvinced of sin, upon this exercise, at their very entrance into religion: whereas this certainly should not be first, but rather one of the last things. They should begin with the repentance, the knowledge of themselves, of their sinfulness, guilt and helplessness. They should be instructed next to seek peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then let them be taught to retain what they have received, to *walk in the light of his countenance*; yea to walk *in the light as he is in the light*, without any darkness at all, till *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth* them *from all sin*.

20 It was from a full conviction of the absolute necessity there is, of a Christian's setting the Lord always before him, that a set of young Gentlemen in *Oxford*, who many years ago used to spend most of their evenings together, in order to assist each other in working out their salvation, placed that question first, in their scheme of daily self-examination, "Have I been *simple* and *recollected* in all I said or did? Have I been *simple?* That is, setting the Lord always before me, and doing every thing with a single view of pleasing him? *Recollected*, that is, quickly gathering in my scattered thoughts, recovering my simplicity, if I had been in anywise drawn from it, by men or devils, or my own evil heart?" By this means they were preserved from dissipation, and were enabled each of them to say, "By the grace of God *this one thing I do*,

(at leaſt, it is my conſtant aim) I ſee God: I love God: I ſerve God: I glorify him with my body and with my ſpirit."

21. The ſame thing ſeems to be intended by two uncommon words, which are frequently found in the writings of thoſe pious men, who are uſually ſtiled Myſtics. I mean, *Introverſion* and *Extroverſion*. Examine yourſelves, ſays St. *Paul* to the Corinthians, and in them to the Chriſtians of all ages, "Know ye not that Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?" That is, unbelievers, unable to bear the touchſtone of God's word. Now the attending to the voice of Chriſt within you, is what they term *Introverſion*. The turning the eye of the mind from him to outward things they call *Extroverſion*. By this your thoughts wander from God, and you are properly diſſipated: whereas by introverſion, you may be always ſenſible of his loving preſence. You continually hearken to whatever it pleaſes your Lord to ſay to your heart. And if you continually liſten to his inward voice, you will be kept from all diſſipation.

22. We may, laſtly, learn hence, what judgment to form of what is frequently urged in favour of the *Engliſh* nation, and of the preſent age, namely, that in other reſpects *England* ſtands on a level with other nations, and the preſent age ſtands upon a level with any of the preceding. Only it is allowed, we are more *diſſipated* than our neighbours, and this age is more diſſipated than the preceding ages. Nay, if this is allowed, all is allowed. It is allowed that this nation is worſe than any of the neighbouring nations: and that this age is worſe, eſſentially worſe, than any of the preceding ages. For as Diſſipation or Ungodlineſs

Ungodlineſs is the parent of all ſin, of all unrighteouſneſs; of unmercifulneſs, injuſtice, fraud, perfidy; of every poſſible evil temper, evil word or evil action, ſo it in effect comprizes them all. Whatſoever things are impure, whatſoever things are of evil report, whatſoever things are unholy: if there be any vice, all theſe are included in Ungodlineſs, uſually termed Diſſipation. Let not therefore any lover of virtue and truth ſay one word in favour of this monſter: let no lover of mankind once open his mouth, to extenuate the guilt of it. Abhor it, as you would abhor the devil, whoſe offſpring and likeneſs it is. Abhor it, as you would abhor the extinction of all virtue, and the univerſal prevalence of an earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh ſpirit: and flee from it as you would flee (if you ſaw it open before you) *from the lake of fire burning with brimſtone.*

SERMON LXXXII.

On Friendship with the World.

James iv. 4.

Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore desireth to be a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

1. THERE is a passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the *Romans*, which has been often supposed to be of the same import with this. "Be not conformed to this world," ch. xii. v. 2. But it has little or no relation to it; it speaks of quite another thing. Indeed the supposed resemblance arises merely from the use of the word *world* in both places. This naturally leads us to think, that St. Paul means by "conformity to the world," the same which St. James means by "friendship with the world:" whereas they are entirely different things, as the words are quite different in the

the original: (for St. Paul's word is αἰὼν; St. James's is κόσμος.) However the words of St. Paul contain an important direction to the children of God. As if he had said, Be not conformed to either the wisdom, or the spirit, or the fashions *of the age:* of either the unconverted Jews, or the Heathens, among whom ye live. You are called to shew, by the whole tenor of your life and conversation, that you are "renewed in the spirit of your mind, after the image of him that created you," and that your rule is, not the example or will of man, but "the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

2. But it is not strange, that St. James's caution against "Friendship with the world" should be so little understood, even among Christians. For I have not been able to learn that any author, ancient or modern, has wrote upon the subject: no, not (so far as I have observed) for sixteen or seventeen hundred years. Even that excellent writer Mr. *Law*, who has treated so well many other subjects, has not in all his practical treatises, wrote one chapter upon it. No, nor said one word, that I remember, or given one caution against it. I never heard one sermon preached upon it, either before the University or elsewhere. I never was in any company, where the conversation turned explicitly upon it, even for one hour.

3. Yet are there very few subjects of so deep importance; few that so nearly concern the very essence of religion, the life of God in the soul, the continuance and increase, or the decay, yea, extinction of it. From the want of instruction in this respect, the most melancholy consequences have followed. These indeed have not affected

thoſe who were ſtill dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; but they have fallen heavy upon many of thoſe, who were truly alive to God. They have affected many of thoſe called *Methodiſts* in particular, perhaps more than any other people. For want of underſtanding this advice of the Apoſtle, (I hope, rather than from any contempt of it) many among them are ſick, ſpiritually ſick, and many ſleep, who were once thoroughly awakened. And it is well if they awake any more till their ſouls are required of them. It has appeared difficult to me, to account for what I have frequently obſerved: many who were once greatly alive to God, whoſe converſation was in heaven, who had their affections on things above, not on things of the earth: though they walked in all the ordinances of God, though they ſtill abounded in good works, and abſtained from all known ſin, yea, and from the appearance of evil; yet they gradually and inſenſibly decayed, (like *Jonah's* gourd, when the worm ate the root of it) inſomuch, that they are leſs alive to God now, than they were ten, twenty, or thirty years ago. But it is eaſily accounted for, if we obſerve, that as they increaſed in goods, they increaſed in "friendſhip with the world:" which indeed muſt always be the caſe, unleſs the mighty power of God interpoſe. But in the ſame proportion as they increaſed in this, the life of God in their ſouls decreaſed.

4. Is it ſtrange that it ſhould decreaſe, if thoſe words are really found in the Oracles of God? "Ye adulterers and adultereſſes, know ye not, that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God!" What is the meaning of theſe words? Let us ſeriouſly conſider. And may God open the

the eyes of our underſtanding, that in ſpite of all the miſt wherewith the wiſdom of the world would cover us, we may diſcern, what is the good and acceptable will of God.

5. Let us firſt conſider, What it is which the Apoſtle here means by *the world*. He does not here refer to this outward frame of things, termed in Scripture, heaven and earth; but to the inhabitants of the earth, the children of men: or at leaſt the greater part of them. But what part? This is fully determined both by our Lord himſelf, and by his beloved diſciple. Firſt, by our Lord himſelf. His words are, "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you. And all theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they know not him that ſent me." John xv. 18, and ſeq. You ſee here, *the world* is placed on one ſide, and *they who are not of the world* on the other. They whom God has *choſen out of the world*, namely, by *ſanctification of the Spirit and belief of truth*, are ſet in direct oppoſition to thoſe, whom he hath not ſo choſen. Yet again, Thoſe who know not him that ſent me, ſaith our Lord, who know not God, they are *the world*.

6. Equally expreſs are the words of the beloved diſciple. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you: we know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 13. As if he had ſaid, You muſt not expect any ſhould love you, but thoſe that have "paſſed from death unto life." It fol-

lows, Thoſe that are not paſſed from death unto life, that are not alive to God, are *the world*. The ſame we may learn from thoſe words in the fifth chapter, ver. 19. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Here *the world* plainly means, thoſe that are not of God, and who conſequently "lie in the wicked one."

7. Thoſe on the contrary *are of God*, who love God, or at leaſt "fear him, and keep his commandments." This is the loweſt character of thoſe that *are of God*, who are not properly ſons, but ſervants: who *depart from evil*, and ſtudy to do good, and walk in all his ordinances, becauſe they have the fear of God in their heart, and a ſincere deſire to pleaſe him. Fix in your heart, this plain meaning of the term, *the world*, thoſe who do not thus fear God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: it means neither more nor leſs than this.

8. But, underſtanding the term in this ſenſe, what kind of friendſhip may we have with *the world?* We may, we ought to love them as ourſelves, (for they alſo are included in the word *neighbour*) to bear them real good-will; to deſire their happineſs as ſincerely as we deſire the happineſs of our own ſouls: yea, we are in a ſenſe to honour them: (ſeeing we are directed by the Apoſtle to *honour all men*) as the creatures of God, nay, as immortal ſpirits, who are capable of knowing, of loving, and of enjoying him to all eternity. We are to honour them, as redeemed by his blood, who "taſted death for every man." We are to bear them tender compaſſion, when we ſee them forſaking their own mercies, wandering from the path of life, and haſtening

to

to everlasting destruction. We are never willingly to grieve their spirits, or give them any pain: but, on the contrary to give them all the pleasure we innocently can; seeing we are to "please all men for their good." We are never to aggravate their faults; but willingly to allow all the good that is in them.

9. We may, and ought to speak to them on all occasions, in the most kind and obliging manner we can. We ought to speak no evil of them when they are absent, unless it be absolutely necessary; unless it be the only means we know, of preventing their doing hurt: otherwise we are to speak of them with all the respect we can, without transgressing the bounds of truth. We are to behave to them when present with all courtesy, shewing them all the regard we can, without countenancing them in sin. We ought to do them all the good that is in our power, all they are willing to receive from us: following herein the example of the universal Friend, our Father which is in heaven: who till they will condescend to receive greater blessings, gives them such as they are willing to accept: "causing his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sending his rain on the just and on the unjust."

10. But what kind of friendship is it which we may not have with the world? May we not converse with ungodly men at all? Ought we wholly to avoid their company? By no means: the contrary of this has been allowed already. If we were not to converse with them at all, "we must needs go out of the world." Then we could not shew them those offices of kindness, which have been already mentioned. We may doubtless converse with them, first, on business,

in

in the various purpoſes of this life, according to that ſtation therein, wherein the Providence of God has placed us: ſecondly, when courteſy requeſts it: only we muſt take great care, not to carry it too far: thirdly, When we have a reaſonable hope of doing them good. But here too we have an eſpecial need of caution, and of much prayer: otherwiſe we may eaſily burn ourſelves, in ſtriving to pluck other brands out of the burning.

11. We may eaſily hurt our own ſouls, by ſliding into a cloſe attachment, to any of them that know not God. This is the *friendſhip* which is *enmity with God:* we cannot be too jealous over ourſelves, leſt we fall into this deadly ſnare; leſt we contract, or ever we are aware, a love of *complacence* or *delight* in them. Then only do we tread upon ſure ground, when we can ſay with the Pſalmiſt, "All my delight is in the ſaints that are upon earth, and in ſuch as excel in virtue." We ſhould have no *needleſs converſation* with them. It is our duty and our wiſdom, to be no oftener, and no longer with them, than is ſtrictly neceſſary. And during the whole time, we have need to remember and follow the example of him that ſaid, "I kept my mouth as it were with a bridle, while the ungodly was in my ſight." We ſhould enter into no ſort of connexion with them farther than is abſolutely neceſſary. When *Jehoſaphat* forgot this, and formed a connexion with *Ahab*, what was the conſequence? He firſt loſt his ſubſtance: *the ſhips* they ſent *out were broken at Ezion-geber.* And when he was not content with this warning, as well as that of the prophet *Micaiah*, but would go up with him to *Ramoth gilead*, he was on the point of loſing his life.

12. Above

12. Above all, we should tremble at the very thought of entering into a marriage-covenant, the closest of all others, with any person who does not love, or at least, fear God. This is the most horrid folly, the most deplorable madness, that a child of God can possibly plunge into: as it implies every sort of connexion with the ungodly, which a Christian is bound in conscience to avoid. No wonder then it is so flatly forbidden of God: that the prohibition is so absolute and peremptory: "Be not unequally yoked with an unbeliever" Nothing can be more express. Especially if we understand by the word *unbeliever*, one that is so far from being a believer in the gospel-sense, from being able to say, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me;" that he has not even the faith of a servant: he does not *fear God and work righteousness*.

13. But for what reasons is the friendship of the world so absolutely prohibited? Why are we so strictly required to abstain from it? For two general reasons: first, because it is a sin in itself: secondly, because it is attended with most dreadful consequences.

First, it is a sin in itself: and indeed a sin of no common die. According to the oracles of God, *friendship with the world* is no less than spiritual adultery. All who are guilty of it are addressed by the Holy Ghost in those terms, *Ye adulterers and adulteresses*. It is plainly violating of our marriage-contract with God: by loving the creature more than the Creator In flat contradiction to that kind command, *My son, give me thine heart*.

14. It is a sin of the most heinous nature, as not

not only implying ignorance of God, and forgetfulneſs of him, or inattention to him, but poſitive *enmity againſt God.* It is openly palpably ſuch. *Know ye not,* ſays the Apoſtle, can ye poſſibly be ignorant of this ſo plain, ſo undeniable a truth, "that the friendſhip of the world is enmity againſt God?" Nay, and how terrible is the inference which he draws from hence? "Therefore whoſoever will be a friend of the world" (the words properly rendered are, Whoſoever "deſireth to be a friend of the world,") of the men who know not God, whether he attain it or no, *is* ipſo facto, *conſtituted an enemy of God.* This very deſire, whether ſucceſsful or not, gives him a right to that appellation.

15. And as it is a ſin, a very heinous ſin in itſelf, ſo it is attended with the moſt dreadful conſequences. It frequently entangles men again in the commiſſion of thoſe ſins, from which *they were clean eſcaped.* It generally makes them *partakers of other men's ſins,* even thoſe which they do not commit themſelves. It gradually abates their abhorrence and dread of ſin in general, and thereby prepares them for falling an eaſy prey to any ſtrong temptation. It lays them open to all thoſe ſins of omiſſion, whereof their worldly acquaintance are guilty. It inſenſibly leſſens their exactneſs in private prayer, in family duty, in faſting, in attending public ſervice, and partaking of the Lord's Supper. The indifference of thoſe that are near them, with reſpect to all theſe, will gradually influence them: even if they ſay not one word, (which is hardly to be ſuppoſed) to recommend their own practice, yet their example ſpeaks, and is many times of more force than any other language. By this example they are unavoidably

voidably betrayed, and almoſt continually, into unprofitable, yea, and uncharitable converſation, till they no longer "ſet a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips," till they can join in backbiting, talebearing and evil-ſpeaking, without any check of conſcience, having ſo frequently grieved the Holy Spirit of God, that he no longer reproves them for it: inſomuch that their diſcourſe is not now, as formerly, "ſeaſoned with ſalt, and meet to miniſter grace to the hearers."

16. But theſe are not all the deadly conſequences that reſult from familiar intercourſe with unholy men. It not only hinders them from ordering their converſation aright, but directly tends to corrupt the heart. It tends to create or increaſe in us, all that pride and ſelf-ſufficiency, all that fretfulneſs to reſent: yea, every irregular paſſion and wrong diſpoſition which are indulged by their companions. It gently leads them into ſinful ſelf-indulgence, and unwillingneſs to deny themſelves; into unreadineſs to bear or take up any croſs; into a ſoftneſs and delicacy; into evil ſhame, and the fear of man that brings numberleſs ſnares. It draws them back into the love of the world, into fooliſh and hurtful deſires, into the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, and the pride of life, till they are ſwallowed up in them. So that in the end, the laſt ſtate of theſe men is far worſe than the firſt.

17. If the children of God will connect themſelves with the men of the world, though the latter ſhould not endeavour to make them like themſelves, (which is a ſuppoſition by no means to be made) yea, though they ſhould neither deſign nor deſire it; yet they will actually do it, whether

whether they design it, and whether they endeavour it, or no. I know not how to account for it, but it is a real fact, that their very spirit is infectious. While you are near them, you are apt to catch their spirit, whether they will or no. Many Physicians have observed, that not only the plague, and putrid or malignant fevers, but almost every disease men are liable to, are more or less infectious. And undoubtedly so are all spiritual diseases: only with great variety, The infection is not so swiftly communicated by some as it is by others. In either case, the person already diseased, does not desire or design to infect another. The man who has the plague, does not desire or intend to communicate his distemper to you. But you are not therefore safe: so keep at a distance, or you will surely be infected. Does not experience shew, that the case is the same with the diseases of the mind? Suppose the proud, the vain, the passionate, the wanton, do not desire or design to infect *you* with their own distempers; yet it is best to keep at a distance from them: you are not safe if you come too near them. You will perceive (it is well if it be not too late) that their very breath is infectious. It has been lately discovered, That there is an atmosphere surrounding every human body; which naturally affects every one that comes within the limits of it. Is there not something analogous to this, with regard to a human spirit? If you continue within their atmosphere (so to speak) you can hardly escape the being infected. The contagion spreads from soul to soul, as well as from body to body, even though the persons diseased do not intend or desire it. But can this reasonably be supposed? Is it not a notorious truth, that men of the world,

(exceeding few excepted,) eagerly desire to make their companions like themselves? Yea, and use every means, with their utmost skill and industry, to accomplish their desire. Therefore fly for your life! Do not play with the fire, but escape before the flames kindle upon you.

18. But how many are the pleas for *Friendship with the world?* And how strong are the temptations to it? Such of these as are the most dangerous, and at the same time most common, we will consider.

To begin with one that is the most dangerous of all others, and at the same time by no means uncommon. "I grant, says one, the person I am about to marry, is not a religious person. She does not make any pretensions to it. She has little thought about it. But she is a beautiful creature. She is extremely agreeable, and I think will make me a lovely companion."

This is a snare indeed! Perhaps one of the greatest that human nature is liable to. This is such a temptation as no power of man is able to overcome. Nothing less than the mighty power of God, can make a way for you to escape from it. And this can work a compleat deliverance: his grace is sufficient for you. But not unless you are a worker together with him: not unless you deny yourself and take up your cross. And what you do, you must do at once! Nothing can be done by degrees. Whatever you do in this important case, must be done at one stroke. If it be done at all, you must at once cut off the right hand, and cast it from you! Here is no time for conferring with flesh and blood. At once, conquer or perish!

19. Let us turn the tables. Suppose a woman

that loves God, is addreſt by an agreeable man, genteel, lively, entertaining, ſuitable in all other reſpects, though not religious: what ſhould ſhe do in ſuch a caſe? What ſhe *ſhould* do, if ſhe believes the Bible, is ſufficiently clear. But what *can* ſhe do? Is not this

"A teſt for human frailty too ſevere?"

Who is able to ſtand in ſuch a trial? Who can reſiſt ſuch a temptation! None but one that holds faſt the ſhield of faith, and earneſtly cries to the Strong for ſtrength. None but one that gives herſelf to watching and prayer, and continues therein with all perſeverance. If ſhe does this, ſhe will be a happy witneſs in the midſt of an unbelieving world, that as "all things are poſſible with God, *ſo all* things are poſſible to *her* that believeth."

20. But either a man or woman may aſk, "What if the perſon who ſeeks my acquaintance be a perſon of a ſtrong natural underſtanding, cultivated by various learning? May not I gain much uſeful knowledge by a familiar intercourſe with him? May I not learn many things from him, and much improve my own underſtanding?" Undoubtedly you may improve your own underſtanding, and you may gain much knowledge; but ſtill, if he has not at leaſt the fear of God, your loſs will be far greater than your gain. For you can hardly avoid decreaſing in holineſs as much as you increaſe in knowledge. And if you loſe one degree of inward or outward holineſs, all the knowledge you gain will be no equivalent.

21. "But

21. "But his fine and ſtrong underſtanding improved by education, is not his chief recommendation. He has more valuable qualifications than theſe: he is remarkably good humoured: he is of a compaſſionate, humane ſpirit, and has much generoſity in his temper." On theſe very accounts, if he does not fear God, he is infinitely more dangerous. If you converſe intimately with a perſon of this character, you will ſurely drink into his ſpirit. It is hardly poſſible for you to avoid ſtopping juſt where he ſtops. I have found nothing ſo difficult in all my life, as to converſe with men of this kind (*good ſort of men* as they are commonly called) without being hurt by them. O beware of them! Converſe with them juſt as much as buſineſs requires, and no more! Otherwiſe (though you do not feel any preſent harm, yet) by ſlow and imperceptible degrees, they will attach you again to earthly things, and damp the life of God in your ſoul.

22. It may be, the perſons who are deſirous of your acquaintance, though they are not experienced in religion, yet underſtand it well, ſo that you frequently reap advantage from their converſation. If this be really the caſe, (as I have known a few inſtances of the kind) it ſeems, you may converſe with them: only very ſparingly and very cautiouſly. Otherwiſe you will loſe more of your ſpiritual life, than all the knowledge you gain is worth.

23. "But the perſons in queſtion are uſeful to me, in carrying on my temporal buſineſs. Nay, on many occaſions, they are neceſſary to me, ſo that I could not well carry it on without them." Inſtances of this kind frequently occur. And this is doubtleſs a ſufficient reaſon for having

ſome intercourſe, perhaps frequently, with men that do not fear God. But even this is by no means a reaſon for your contracting an intimate acquaintance with them. And you here need to take the utmoſt care, "leſt even by that converſe with them which is neceſſary, while your fortune in the world increaſes, the grace of God ſhould decreaſe in your ſoul."

24. There may be one more plauſible reaſon given for ſome intimacy with an unholy man. You may ſay, "I have been helpful to him. I have aſſiſted him when he was in trouble. And he remembers it with gratitude. He eſteems and loves *me*, though he does not love God. Ought I not then to love *him*? Ought I not to return love for love? Do not even heathens and publicans ſo?" I anſwer, you ſhould certainly return love for love; but it does not follow, that you ſhould have any intimacy with him. That would be at the peril of your ſoul. Let your love give itſelf vent in conſtant and fervent prayer: wreſtle with God for him. But let your love for him not carry you ſo far, as to weaken, if not deſtroy your own ſoul.

25. "But muſt I not be intimate with my relations? And that, whether they fear God or not? Has not his Providence recommended theſe to me?" Undoubtedly it has: but there are relations, nearer or more diſtant. The neareſt relations are huſbands and wives. As theſe have taken each other for better for worſe, they muſt make the beſt of each other; ſeeing as God has joined them together, none can put them aſunder: unleſs in caſe of adultery; or when the life of one or the other is in imminent danger.

danger. Parents are almoſt as nearly connected with their children. You cannot part with them while they are young: it being your duty, to *train them up* with all care, *in the way wherein they ſhould go*. How frequently you ſhould converſe with them when they are grown up, is to be determined by chriſtian prudence. This alſo will determine, how long it is expedient for children, if it be at their own choice, to remain with their parents. In general, if they do not fear God, you ſhould leave them as ſoon as is convenient. But wherever you are, take care (if it be in your power) that they do not want the neceſſaries or conveniences of life. As for all other relations, even brothers or ſiſters, if they are of the world, you are under no obligation to be intimate with them: you may be civil and friendly at a diſtance.

26. But allowing that "the friendſhip of the world is enmity againſt God," and conſequently that it is the moſt excellent way, indeed the only way to heaven, to avoid all intimacy with worldly men; yet who has reſolution to walk therein? Who even of thoſe that love or fear God? For theſe only are concerned in the preſent queſtion. A few I have known, who even in this reſpect were lights in a benighted land: who did not and would not either contract or continue any acquaintance, with perſons of the moſt refined and improved underſtanding, and the moſt engaging tempers, merely becauſe they were of the world, becauſe they were not alive to God. Yea, though they were capable of improving them in knowledge, or of aſſiſting them in buſineſs. Nay, though they admired and eſteemed

them for that very religion, which they did not themselves experience: a case one would hardly think possible, but of which there are many instances at this day. Familiar intercourse even with these, they steadily and resolutely refrain from, for conscience sake.

27. Go thou and do likewise, whosoever thou art, that art a child of God by faith. Whatever it cost, flee spiritual adultery. Have no friendship with the world. However tempted thereto by profit or pleasure, contract no intimacy with worldly-minded men. And if thou hast contracted any such already, break it off without delay. Yea, if thy ungodly friend be dear to thee as a right eye, or useful as a right hand, yet confer not with flesh and blood, but pluck out the right eye, cut off the right hand, and cast them from thee! It is not an indifferent thing. Thy life is at stake: eternal life, or eternal death. And is it not better to go into life, having one eye or one hand, than having both, to be cast into hell-fire? When thou knewest no better, the times of ignorance God winked at. But now thine eyes are opened, now the light is come; walk in the light. Touch not pitch, lest thou be defiled. At all events, *keep thyself pure!*

28. But whatever others do, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, hear this, all ye that are called Methodists. However importuned or tempted thereto, have no friendship with the world. Look round, and see the melancholy effects it has produced among your brethren! How many of the mighty are fallen! How many have fallen by this very thing? They would take no warning: they *would* converse, and that intimately with earthly-minded men, till

" they

" they measured back their steps to earth again!" O *come out from among them!* from all unholy men, however harmless they may appear; *and be ye separate:* at least so far as to have no intimacy with them. As " your fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" so let it be with those, and those only who at least seek the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. So *shall ye be,* in a peculiar sense, " my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty!"

SERMON

SERMON LXXXIII.

In what Sense we are to separate from the World.

2 Corinthians vi. 17, 18.

Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you:
And I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1. HOW exceeding few, in the religious world, have duly considered these solemn words! We have read them over and over, but never laid them to heart, or observed that they contain as plain and express a command as any in the whole Bible. And it is to be feared, there are still fewer that understand the genuine meaning of this direction. Numberless persons in *England* have interpreted it as a command to come out of the established Church. And in the same sense it has been understood by thousands

thouſands in the neighbouring kingdoms. Abundance of ſermons have been preached, and of books wrote upon this ſuppoſition. And indeed many pious men have grounded their ſeparation from the Church, chiefly on this text. 'God himſelf, ſay they, commands us,' "Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate." And it is only upon this condition, that he will *receive* us, and we "ſhall be the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty."

2. But this interpretation is totally foreign to the deſign of the Apoſtle, who is not here ſpeaking of this or that Church, but on quite another ſubject. Neither did the Apoſtle himſelf, or any of his brethren draw any ſuch inference from the words. Had they done ſo, it would have been a flat contradiction, both to the example and precept of their Maſter. For although the Jewiſh Church was then full as *unclean*, as unholy both inwardly and outwardly as any Chriſtian Church now upon earth, yet our Lord conſtantly attended the ſervice of it. And he directed his followers in this, as in every other reſpect, to *tread in his ſteps*. This is clearly implied in that remarkable paſſage, "The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in Moſes' ſeat: all therefore, whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do: but do not ye after their works; for they ſay and do not," Matt. xxiii. 1. Even though they *themſelves ſay and do not*, though their lives contradict their doctrines, though they were ungodly men, yet our Lord here not only permits, but requires his diſciples to hear them. For he requires them to "obſerve and do what they ſay;" but this could not be, if they did not hear them. Accordingly the Apoſtles, as long as they were

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at *Jerusalem*, constantly attended the public service. Therefore it is certain these words have no reference to a separation from the established Church.

3. Neither have they reference to the direction given by the Apostle, in his first epistle to the *Corinthians*. The whole passage runs thus: "I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolators, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you, not to company, If *any man that is called a brother*, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat," chap. vi. ver. 9. 11. This wholly relates to them that are members of the same christian community. The Apostle tells them expressly, He does not give this direction not to company with such and such persons, with regard to the heathens or to men in general: and adds this plain account, "For then must ye needs go out of the world:" you could transact no business in it. "But if any man that is called a brother," that is connected with you in the same religious Society, "be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat." How important a caution is this? But how little is it observed, even by those that are in other respects conscientious Christians! Indeed some parts of it are not easy to be observed, for a plain reason; they are not easy to be understood. I mean, it is not easy to be understood, to whom the characters belong. It is very difficult, for instance, to know, unless in some

ſome glaring caſes, to whom the character of an *extortioner*, or of a *covetous* man belongs. We can hardly know one or the other, without ſeeming (at leaſt) to be *buſy bodies in other men's matters*. And yet the prohibition is as ſtrong concerning converſe with theſe, as with fornicators or adulterers. We can only act in the ſimplicity of our hearts, without ſetting up for infallible judges, (ſtill willing to be better informed) according to the beſt light we have.

But although this direction relates only to our Chriſtian brethren, (ſuch at leaſt by outward profeſſion) That in the text is of a far wider extent; it unqueſtionably relates to all mankind. It clearly requires us, to keep at a diſtance, as far as is practicable, from all ungodly men. Indeed it ſeems, the word which we render *unclean thing*, τὸ ἀκαθάρτον, might rather be rendered *unclean perſon*; probably alluding to the Ceremonial Law, which forbad *touching* one that was legally unclean. But even here, were we to underſtand the expreſſion literally, were we to take the words in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, the ſame abſurdity would follow; we muſt needs, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, "go out of the world." We ſhould not be able to abide in thoſe callings, which the Providence of God has aſſigned us. Were we not to converſe at all with men of thoſe characters, it would be impoſſible to tranſact our temporal buſineſs. So that every conſcientious Chriſtian would have nothing to do, but to flee into the deſert. It would not ſuffice, to turn recluſes, to ſhut ourſelves up in monaſteries or nunneries: for even then we muſt have ſome intercourſe with ungodly men, in order to procure the neceſſaries of life.

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5. The words therefore must necessarily be understood, with considerable restriction. They do not prohibit our conversing with any man, good or bad, in the way of worldly business. A thousand occasions will occur, whereon we must converse with them, in order to transact those affairs, which cannot be done without them. And some of these may require us, to have frequent intercourse with drunkards, or fornicators: yea, sometimes it may be requisite for us, to spend a considerable time in their company: otherwise we should not be able to fulfil the duties of our several callings. Such conversation therefore with men, holy or unholy, is no way contrary to the Apostle's advice.

6. What is it then which the Apostle forbids? First, The conversing with ungodly men, when there is no necessity, no providential call, no business, that requires it: Secondly, The conversing with them more frequently than business necessarily requires: Thirdly, the spending more time in their company than is necessary to finish our business: above all, Fourthly, the chusing ungodly persons, however ingenious or agreeable, to be our ordinary companions, or to be our familiar friends. If any instance of this kind will admit of less excuse than others, it is that which the Apostle expressly forbids elsewhere, The being *unequally yoked with* an *unbeliever* in marriage: with any person that has not the love of God in their heart, or at least, the fear of God before their eyes. I do not know any thing that can justify this: neither the sense, wit or beauty of the person; nor temporal advantage; nor fear of want; no, nor even the command of a parent. For if any parent command what is contrary

trary to the word of God, the child ought to obey God rather than man.

7. The ground of this prohibition is laid down at large in the preceding verſes. "What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? What communion hath light with darkneſs? And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" (Taking that word in the extenſive ſenſe, for him that hath neither the love nor fear of God:) "Ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people." It follows, "Wherefore come out from among them:" the unrighteous, the children of darkneſs, the ſons of *Belial*, the unbelievers: "And be ye ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, or perſon, and I will receive you."

8. Here is the ground of this prohibition, to have any more intercourſe with unholy men than is abſolutely neceſſary. There can be no profitable *fellowſhip* between the righteous and the unrighteous; as there can be *no communion* between light and darkneſs; (whether you underſtand this of natural or ſpiritual darkneſs.) As Chriſt can have *no concord* with *Belial*, ſo a believer in him can have no concord with an unbeliever. It is abſurd to imagine, that any true union or concord ſhould be between two perſons, while one of them remains in the darkneſs and the other walks in the light. They are ſubjects not only of two ſeparate, but of two oppoſite kingdoms. They act upon quite different principles: they aim at quite different ends. It will neceſſarily follow that frequently, if not always,

they will walk in different paths. How can they walk together, till they are agreed? Until they both serve either Christ or Belial?

9. And what are the consequences of our not obeying this direction? Of our not coming out from among unholy men? Of not being separate from them, but contracting or continuing a familiar intercourse with them? It is probable, it will not immediately have any apparent, visible ill consequences. It is hardly to be expected, that it will immediately lead us into any outward sin. Perhaps it may not presently occasion our neglect of any outward duty. It will first sap the foundations of religion: it will by little and little damp our zeal for God: it will gently cool that fervency of spirit, which attended our first love. If they do not openly oppose any thing we say or do, yet their very spirit will by insensible degrees affect our spirit, and transfuse into it the same lukewarmness and indifference toward God and the things of God. It will weaken all the springs of our soul, destroy the vigour of our spirit, and cause us more and more to slacken our pace, in running the race that is set before us.

10. By the same degrees, all needless intercourse with unholy men, will weaken our divine evidence and conviction of things unseen: it will dim the eyes of the soul whereby we see him that is invisible, and weaken our confidence in him. It will gradually abate our "taste of the powers of the world to come," and deaden that hope, which before made us "sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus." It will imperceptibly cool that flame of love, which before enabled us to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside

beſide thee!" Thus it ſtrikes at the root of all vital religion, of our fellowſhip with the Father and with the Son.

11. By the ſame degrees, and in the ſame ſecret and unobſerved manner, it will prepare us to "meaſure back our ſteps to earth again." It will lead us ſoftly, to relapſe into the love of the world from which we were clean eſcaped; to fall gently into "the deſire of the fleſh," the ſeeking happineſs in the pleaſures of ſenſe; "the deſire of the eye," the ſeeking happineſs in the pleaſures of imagination, "and the pride of life," the ſeeking it in pomp, in riches, or in the praiſe of man. And all this may be done, by the aſſiſtance of the ſpirit, who "beguiled *Eve* through his ſubtlety," before we are ſenſible of his attack, or are conſcious of any loſs.

12. And it is not only the love of the world in all its branches, which neceſſarily ſteals upon us, while we converſe with men of a worldly ſpirit, farther than duty requires, but every other evil paſſion and temper, of which the human ſoul is capable: in particular, pride, vanity, cenſoriouſneſs, evil-ſurmiſing, proneneſs to revenge: while on the other hand, levity, gaiety and diſſipation, ſteal upon us and increaſe continually. We know how all theſe abound in the men that know not God. And it cannot be but they will inſinuate themſelves into all, who frequently and freely converſe with them: they inſinuate moſt deeply into thoſe who are not apprehenſive of any danger: and moſt of all, if they have any particular affection, if they have more love than duty requires, for thoſe who do not love God, with whom they familiarly converſe.

13. Hitherto I have ſuppoſed that the perſons with whom you converſe, are ſuch as we uſe to call *good ſort of people*: ſuch as are ſtiled in the cant-term of the day, men of *worthy* characters: (one of the moſt ſilly, inſignificant words, that ever came in faſhion) I have ſuppoſed them to be free from curſing, ſwearing, profaneneſs; from ſabbath-breaking and drunkenneſs; from lewdneſs either in word or action; from diſhoneſty, lying and ſlandering: in a word, to be entirely clear from open vice of every kind. Otherwiſe whoever has even the fear of God muſt in anywiſe keep at a diſtance from them. But I am afraid I have made a ſuppoſition which hardly can be admitted. I am afraid, ſome of the perſons with whom you converſe, more than buſineſs neceſſarily requires, do not deſerve even the character of *good ſort of men*: are not *worthy* of any thing but ſhame and contempt. Do not ſome of them live in open ſin? In curſing and ſwearing, drunkenneſs, or uncleanneſs? You cannot long be ignorant of this: for they take little pains to hide it. Now is it not certain, all vice is of an infectious nature; for who can touch pitch and not be defiled? From theſe therefore you ought undoubtedly to flee, as from the face of a ſerpent. Otherwiſe how ſoon may *evil communications corrupt good manners?*

14. I have ſuppoſed likewiſe, that theſe unholy perſons with whom you frequently converſe, have no deſire to communicate their own ſpirit to *you*, or to induce *you* to follow their example. But this alſo is a ſuppoſition which can hardly be admitted. In many caſes their intereſt may be advanced, by your being a partaker of their ſins. But ſuppoſing intereſt to be out of the queſtion, does

does not every man naturally desire, and more or less endeavour to bring over his acquaintance to his own opinion or party? So that as all good men desire and endeavour to make others good, like themselves, in like manner, all bad men desire and endeavour to make their companions as bad as themselves.

14. But if they do not, if we allow this almost impossible supposition, that they do not desire or use any endeavours, to bring you over to their own temper and practice, still it is dangerous to converse with them. I speak not only of openly vicious men, but of all that do not love God, or at least fear him, and sincerely seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Admit such companions do not endeavour to make you like themselves, does this prove, you are in no danger from them? See that poor wretch that is ill of the plague! He does not desire, he does not use the least endeavour to communicate his distemper to you. Yet have a care! Touch him not! Nay, go not near him, or you know not how soon you may be in the same condition. To draw the parallel; though we should suppose the man of the world does not desire, design, or endeavour to communicate his distemper to you, yet touch him not! Come not too near him. For it is not only his reasonings or persuasions that may infect your soul, but his very breath is infectious: particularly to those who are apprehensive of no danger.

16. If conversing freely with worldly-minded men has no other ill effect upon you, it will surely, by imperceptible degrees, make you less heavenly minded. It will give a bias to your mind, which will continually draw your soul to earth. It will incline you, without your being conscious

of it, instead of being wholly transformed in the renewing of your mind, to be again conformed to this world, in its spirit, in its maxims, and in its vain conversation. You will fall again into that levity and dissipation of spirit, from which you had before clean escaped into that superfluity of apparel, and into that foolish, frothy, unprofitable conversation, which was an abomination to you, when your soul was alive to God. And you will daily decline from that simplicity both of speech and behaviour, whereby you once adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour.

17. And if you go thus far in conformity to the world, it is hardly to be expected, you will stop here. You will go farther in a short time: having once lost your footing and begun to slide down, it is a thousand to one, you will not stop, till you come to the bottom of the hill: till you fall yourself into some of these outward sins, which your companions commit before your eyes, or in your hearing. Hereby the dread and horror which struck you at first, will gradually abate, till at length you are prevailed upon to follow their example. But suppose they do not lead you into outward sin, if they infect your spirit with pride, anger, or love of the world, it is enough: it is sufficient, without deep repentance, to drown your soul in everlasting perdition: seeing (abstracted from all outward sin) *to be carnally minded is death.*

18. But as dangerous as it is to converse familiarly with men that know not God, it is more dangerous still for men to converse with women of that character: as they are generally more insinuating than men, and have far greater power of persuasion: particularly if they are agreeable

agreeable in their perſons, or pleaſing in their converſation. You muſt be more than man, if you can converſe with ſuch, and not ſuffer any loſs. If you do not feel any fooliſh or unholy deſire; (and who can promiſe that you ſhall not?) Yet it is ſcarce poſſible, that you ſhould not feel more or leſs of an improper ſoftneſs, which will make you leſs willing and leſs able, to perſiſt in that habit of denying yourſelf, and taking up your croſs daily, which conſtitute the character of a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. And we know that not only fornicators and adulterers, but even *the ſoft and effeminate*, the delicate followers of a ſelf-denying Maſter, *ſhall have no part in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God.*

19. Such are the conſequences which muſt ſurely, though perhaps ſlowly follow, the mixing of the children of God with the men of the world. And by this means more than by any other, yea, than by all others put together, are the people called *Methodiſts* likely to loſe their ſtrength and become like other men. It is indeed with a good deſign, and from a real deſire of promoting the glory of God, that many of them admit of familiar converſation with men that know not God. You have a hope of awakening them out of ſleep, and perſuading them to ſeek the things that make for their peace. But if after a competent time of trial, you can make no impreſſion upon them, it will be your wiſdom to give them up to God. Otherwiſe you are more likely to receive hurt from them, than to do them any good. For if you do not raiſe their hearts up to heaven, they will draw yours down to earth. Therefore retreat in time, *and come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate.*

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20. But how may this be done? What is the moſt eaſy and effectual method of ſeparating ourſelves from unholy men? Perhaps a few advices will make this plain, to thoſe that deſire to know and do the will of God.

Firſt, Invite no unholy perſon to your houſe, unleſs on ſome very particular occaſion. You may ſay, "But civility requires this: and ſure, religion is no enemy to civility. Nay the Apoſtle himſelf directs us to *be courteous*, as well as to *be pitiful*." I anſwer, You may be civil, ſufficiently civil, and yet keep them at a proper diſtance. You may be courteous in a thouſand inſtances; and yet ſtand aloof from them. And it was never the deſign of the Apoſtle to recommend any ſuch courteſy as muſt neceſſarily prove a ſnare to the ſoul.

21. Secondly, On no account accept any invitation from an unholy perſon. Never be prevailed upon to pay a viſit, unleſs you wiſh it to be repaid. It may be, a perſon deſirous of your acquaintance, will repeat the viſit twice or thrice. But if you ſteadily refrain from returning it, the viſitant will ſoon be tired. It is not improbable he will be diſobliged: and perhaps he will ſhew ſome marks of reſentment. Lay your account with this, that when any thing of the kind occurs, you may neither be ſurpriſed nor diſcouraged. It is better to pleaſe God and diſpleaſe man, than to pleaſe man and diſpleaſe God.

22. Thirdly, It is probable, you were acquainted with men of the world, before you yourſelf knew God. What is beſt to be done with regard to theſe? How may you moſt eaſily drop their acquaintance? Firſt, allow a ſufficient time to try, whether

whether you cannot by argument and perſuaſion, applied at the ſoft times of addreſs, induce them to chuſe the better part. Spare no pains, Exert all your faith and love, and wreſtle with God in their behalf. If after all, you cannot perceive, that any impreſſion is made upon them, it is your duty gently to withdraw from them, that you be not intangled with them. This may be done in a ſhort time, eaſily and quietly, by not returning their viſits. But you muſt expect they will upbraid you with haughtineſs and unkindneſs, if not to your face, yet behind your back. And this you can ſuffer for a good conſcience. It is properly the reproach of Chriſt.

23. When it pleaſed God to give *me* a ſettled reſolution, to be not a *nominal*, but a *real* Chriſtian, (being then about two and twenty years of age) my acquaintance were as ignorant of God as myſelf. But there was this difference: I knew my own ignorance; they did not know theirs. I faintly endeavoured to help them; but in vain. Mean time I found by ſad experience, that even their *harmleſs* converſation (ſo called) damped all my good reſolutions. But how to get rid of them was the queſtion, which I reſolved in my mind again and again. I ſaw no poſſible way, unleſs it ſhould pleaſe God to remove me to another College. He did ſo, in a manner utterly contrary to all human probability. I was elected Fellow of a College, where I knew not one perſon. I foreſaw, abundance of people would come to ſee me, either out of friendſhip, civility or curioſity; and that I ſhould have offers of acquaintance, new and old: but I had now fixt my plan. Entering now, as it were, into a new world, I reſolved to have no acquaintance by

by chance but by choice; and to chuſe ſuch only as I had reaſon to believe, would help me on in my way to heaven. In conſequence of this, I narrowly obſerved the temper and behaviour of all that viſited me. I ſaw no reaſon to think that the greater part of theſe truly loved or feared God. Such acquaintance therefore I did not chuſe: I could not expect they would do me any good. Therefore when any of theſe came to ſee me, I behaved as courteouſly as I could. But to the queſtion, "When will you come to ſee me?" I returned no anſwer. When they had come a few times, and found I ſtill declined returning the viſit, I ſaw them no more. And I bleſs God, this has been my invariable rule, for about three-ſcore years. I knew many reflections would follow; but that did not move me, as I knew full well, it was my calling to go *through evil report and good report.*

24. I earneſtly adviſe all of you who reſolve to be, not *almoſt, but altogether Chriſtians,* to adopt the ſame plan, however contrary it may be to fleſh and blood. Narrowly obſerve, which of thoſe that fall in your way, are like-minded with yourſelf: who among them have you reaſon to believe, fears God and works righteouſneſs? Set them down as worthy of your acquaintance; gladly and freely converſe with them at opportunities. As to all who do not anſwer that character, gently and quietly let them drop. However good natured and ſenſible the may be, they will do you no real ſervice. Nay, if they did not lead you into outward ſin, yet they would be a continual clog to your ſoul, and would hinder your running with vigour and cheerfulneſs the race that is ſet before you. And if any of your friends,

friends, that did once run well, *turn back from the holy commandment once delivered to them*; firſt uſe every method that prudence can ſuggeſt, to bring them again into the good way. But if you cannot prevail, let them go: only ſtill commending them unto God in prayer. Drop all familiar intercourſe with them, and ſave your own ſoul.

25. I adviſe you, Fourthly, Walk circumſpectly, with regard to your relations. With your parents, whether religious or not, you muſt certainly converſe if they deſire it: and with your brothers and ſiſters: more eſpecially if they want your ſervice. I do not know that you are under any ſuch obligation, with reſpect to your more diſtant relations. Courteſy indeed, and natural affection may require, that you ſhould viſit them ſometimes. But if they neither know nor ſeek God, it ſhould certainly be as ſeldom as poſſible. And when you are with them, you ſhould not ſtay a day longer than decency requires. Again, whichſoever of them you are with at any time, remember that ſolemn caution of the Apoſtle, "Let no corrupt communication [*converſation*] come out of your mouth: but that which is good, to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace to the hearers." You have no authority to vary from this rule; otherwiſe you *grieve the holy Spirit of God*. And if you keep cloſely to it, thoſe who have no religion will ſoon diſpenſe with your company.

26. Thus it is that thoſe who fear or love God ſhould *come out from among* all that do not fear him. Thus in a plain ſcriptural ſenſe, you ſhould *be ſeparate* from them, from all unneceſſary intercourſe with them. Yea, *Touch not*, ſaith the Lord,

Lord, *the unclean thing* or *perſon*, any farther than neceſſity requires: "and I will receive you" into the houſhold of God. "And I will be unto you a Father," will embrace you with paternal affection: "and ye ſhall be unto me ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty." The promiſe is expreſs to all that renounce the company of ungodly men, (provided their ſpirit and converſation are in other reſpects alſo ſuitable to their duty.) God does here abſolutely engage to give them all the bleſſings he has prepared for his beloved children, both in time and eternity. Let all thoſe therefore who have any regard for the favour and the bleſſings of God, firſt beware how they contract any acquaintance, or form any connexion with ungodly men; any farther than neceſſary buſineſs, or ſome other providential call requires: and ſecondly, with all poſſible ſpeed, all that the nature of the thing will admit, break off all ſuch acquaintance already contracted, and all ſuch connexions already formed. Let no pleaſure reſulting from ſuch acquaintance, no gain found or expected from ſuch connexions, be of any conſideration when laid in the balance, againſt a clear poſitive command of God. In ſuch a caſe, "pluck out the right eye," tear away the moſt pleaſing acquaintance, "and caſt it from thee:" give up all thought, all deſign of ſeeking it again. "Cut off the right hand:" abſolutely renounce the moſt profitable connexion, "and caſt it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye *or one hand*, than having two, to be caſt into hell fire."

SERMON

SERMON LXXXIV.

ON TEMPTATION.

1 CORINTHIANS x. 13.

There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

1. IN the foregoing part of the chapter the Apostle has been reciting on the one hand, the unparalleled mercies of God to the Israelites; and on the other, the unparalleled ingratitude of that disobedient and gainsaying people. And all these things, as the Apostle observes, "were written for our ensample:" that we might take warning from them, so as to avoid their grievous sins, and escape their terrible punishment. He then adds that solemn and important caution, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

2. But if we obſerve theſe words attentively, will there not appear a conſiderable difficulty in them, "Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall? If a man only *thinks he ſtands*, he is in no danger of falling. It is not poſſible that any one ſhould fall, if he only *thinks he ſtands*. The ſame difficulty occurs, according to our tranſlation, in thoſe well known words of our Lord, (the importance of which we may eaſily learn from their being repeated in the Goſpel no leſs than eight times) "To him that hath ſhall be given; but from him that hath not ſhall be taken away, even *what he ſeemeth to have*." *That which he* ſeemeth to have! Nay, if he only *ſeems to have it*, it is impoſſible it ſhould be taken away. None can take away from another what he only *ſeems to have*. What a man only *ſeems to have*, he cannot poſſibly loſe. This difficulty may at firſt appear impoſſible to be ſurmounted. It is really ſo; it cannot be ſurmounted, if the common tranſlation be allowed. But if we obſerve the proper meaning of the original word, the difficulty vaniſhes away. It may be allowed that the word δοκεῖ does (ſometimes, at leaſt in ſome Authors) mean no more than *to ſeem*. But I much doubt whether it ever bears that meaning, in any part of the inſpired writings. By a careful conſideration of every text in the New Teſtament, wherein this word occurs, I am fully convinced, that it no where leſſens, but every where ſtrengthens the ſenſe of the word to which it is annexed. Accordingly ὁ δοκεῖ ἔχειν, does not mean, "what he ſeems to have;" but on the contrary, "what he aſſuredly hath." And ſo ὁ δοκῶν ἑστάναι, not "he that ſeemeth to ſtand," or he that "thinketh he ſtandeth," but "he that aſſuredly ſtandeth;" he who

who ſtandeth ſo faſt, that he does not appear to be in any danger of falling: he that ſaith, like *David*, "I ſhall never be moved: thou, Lord, haſt made my hill ſo ſtrong." Yet at that very time, thus ſaith the Lord, "Be not high-minded, but fear. Elſe ſhalt thou be cut off:" elſe ſhalt thou alſo be moved from thy ſtedfaſtneſs. The ſtrength which thou aſſuredly haſt, ſhall be taken away. As firmly as thou didſt really ſtand, thou wilt fall into ſin, if not into hell.

3. But leſt any ſhould be diſcouraged by the conſideration of thoſe who once ran well, and were afterwards overcome by temptation; leſt the fearful of heart ſhould be utterly caſt down, ſuppoſing it impoſſible for them to ſtand, the Apoſtle ſubjoins to that ſerious exhortation, theſe comfortable words, "There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.

I. 1. Let us begin with the obſervation which uſhers in this comfortable promiſe, "There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man." Our tranſlators ſeem to have been ſenſible that this expreſſion, *common to man*, does by no means reach the force of the original word. Hence they ſubſtitute another in the margin, *moderate*. But this ſeems to be leſs ſignificant than the other, and farther from the meaning of it. Indeed it is not eaſy to find any ſingle word in the Engliſh tongue, which anſwers the word ἀνθρώπινος. I believe the ſenſe of it can only be expreſſed by ſome ſuch circumlocution as this; "Such as is ſuited to the nature and circumſtances

of man: such as every man may reasonably expect, if he considers the nature of his body and his soul, and his situation in the present world." If we duly consider these, we shall not be surprised at any temptations that hath befallen us: seeing it is no other than such a creature, in such a situation has all reason to expect.

2. Consider first, the nature of that body with which your soul is connected. How many are the evils, which it is every day, every hour liable to? Weakness, sickness and disorders of a thousand kinds, are its natural attendants. Consider the inconceivably minute fibres, threads abundantly finer than hair, (called from thence capillary vessels) whereof every part of it is composed; consider the innumerable multitude of equally fine pipes and strainers, all filled with circulating juice! And will not the breach of a few of these fibres, or the obstruction of a few of these tubes, particularly in the brain, or heart, or lungs, destroy our ease, health, strength, if not life itself? Now if we observe that all pain implies temptation, how numberless must the temptations be, which will beset every man, more or less, sooner or later, while he dwells in this corruptible body?

3. Consider, Secondly, the present state of the soul, as long as it inhabits the house of clay. I do not mean in its unregenerate state, while it lies in darkness and the shadow of death; under the dominion of the prince of darkness, without hope, and without God in the world. No: look upon men who are raised above that deplorable state. See those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Yet still how weak is their understanding? How limited its extent? How confused, how

how inaccurate are our apprehenſions, of even the things that are round about us? How liable are the wiſeſt of men to miſtake? To form falſe judgments? To take falſehood for truth, and truth for falſehood? Evil for good, and good for evil? What ſtarts, what wanderings of imagination are we continually ſubject to? In how many are the temptations which we have to expect, even from theſe innocent infirmities?

4. Conſider, Thirdly, what is the preſent ſituation of even thoſe that fear God. They dwell in the ruins of a diſordered world, among men, that know not God, that care not for him, and whoſe heart is fully ſet in them to do evil. How many of them are forced to cry out "Wo is me, that I am conſtrained to dwell with Meſech: to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar," among the enemies of God and man! How immenſely out-numbered are thoſe that would do well, by them that neither fear God nor regard man. And how ſtriking is *Cowley's* obſervation? If a man that was armed cap-a-pie, was cloſed in by a thouſand naked *Indians*, their number would give them ſuch an advantage over him, that it would be ſcarce poſſible for him to eſcape. What hope then would there be for a naked, unarmed man to eſcape, who was ſurrounded by a thouſand armed men! Now this is the caſe of every good man. He is not armed either with force or fraud, and is turned out naked as he is, among thouſands that are armed with the whole armour of Satan, and provided with all the weapons which the prince of this world can ſupply out of the armoury of hell. If then he is not deſtroyed, yet how muſt a good man be tempted in the midſt of this evil world?

5. But is it only from wicked men that temptations arise to them that fear God? It is very natural to imagine this: and almost every one thinks so. Hence how many of us have said in our hearts, "O! if my lot were but cast among good men, among those that loved or even feared God, I should be free from all these temptations." Perhaps you would: probably you would not find the same sort of temptations, which you have now to encounter. But you would surely meet with temptations of some other kind, which you would find equally hard to bear. For even good men in general, though sin has not dominion over them, yet are not freed from the remains of it. They have still the remains of an evil heart, ever prone to *depart from the living God*. They have the seeds of pride, of anger, of foolish desire; indeed of every unholy temper. And any of these, if they do not continually watch and pray, may, and naturally will spring up, and trouble not themselves only, but all that are round about them. We must not therefore depend upon finding no temptation, from those that fear, yea, in a measure, love God. Much less must we be surprised, if some of those who once loved God in sincerity, should lay greater temptations in our way, than many of those that never knew him.

6. "But can we expect to find any temptation from those that are *perfected in love?*" This is an important question, and deserves a particular consideration. I answer, first, You may find every kind of temptation, from those who *suppose* they are perfected, when indeed they are not: and so you may, secondly, from those who once really were so, but are now moved from their stedfastness.

ſtedfaſtneſs. And if you are not aware of this, if you think they are ſtill what they were once, the temptation will be harder to bear. Nay, thirdly, even thoſe who *ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt has made them free*, who are now really perfect in love, may ſtill be an occaſion of temptation to *you*. For they are ſtill encompaſt with infirmities. They may be dull of apprehenſion: they may have a natural heedleſſneſs, or a treacherous memory: they may have too lively an imagination: and any of theſe may cauſe little improprieties, either in ſpeech or behaviour, which though not ſinful in themſelves, may try all the grace you have: eſpecially if you impute to perverſeneſs of will (as it is very natural to do) what is really owning to defect of memory, or weakneſs of underſtanding; if theſe appear to you to be voluntary miſtakes, which are really involuntary. So proper was the anſwer which a Saint of God (now in *Abraham's* boſom) gave me ſome years ago, when I ſaid, *Jenny*, ſurely now your Miſtreſs and you, can neither of you be a trial to the other, as God has ſaved you both from ſin: "O Sir, ſaid ſhe, if we are ſaved from ſin, we ſtill have infirmities enough to try all the grace that God has given us."

7. But beſides evil men, do not evil ſpirits alſo continually ſurround us on every ſide? Do not Satan and his angels continually go about, ſeeking whom they may devour? Who is out of the reach of their malice and ſubtlety? Not the wiſeſt or the beſt of the children of men. *The ſervant is not above his Maſter.* If then they tempted him, will they not tempt us alſo? Yea, it may be, ſhould God ſee good to permit, more or leſs to the end of our lives. *No temptation* therefore *hath*

taken

taken us, which we had not reaſon to expect, either from our body or ſoul, either from evil ſpirits or evil men, yea, or even from good men, till our ſpirits return to God that gave them.

II. 1. Meantime what a comfort is it to know, with the utmoſt certainty, that *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able.* He knoweth what our ability is, and cannot be miſtaken. *He knoweth* preciſely *whereof we are made: he remembereth that we are but duſt.* And he will ſuffer no temptation to befal us, but ſuch as is proportioned to our ſtrength. Not only his juſtice requires this, which could not puniſh us for not reſiſting any temptation, if it was ſo diſproportioned to our ſtrength, that it was impoſſible for us to reſiſt it. Not only his mercy; that tender mercy, which is over us, as well as over all his works: but above all his faithfulneſs; ſeeing all his words are faithful and true; and the whole tenor of his promiſes altogether agrees with that declaration, *As thy day, ſo thy ſtrength ſhall be.*

2 In that execrable ſlaughter houſe, the *Romiſh* Inquiſition, (moſt unfortunately called "The Houſe of Mercy!") it is the cuſtom of thoſe holy butchers, while they are tearing a man's ſinews upon the rack, to have the Phyſician of the houſe ſtanding by. His buſineſs is, from time to time, to obſerve the eyes, the pulſe, and other circumſtances of the ſufferer, and to give notice, when the torture has continued ſo long as it can, without putting an end to his life: that it may be preſerved long enough for him to undergo the reſidue of their tortures. But notwithſtanding all the Phyſician's care, he is ſometimes miſtaken: and death puts a period to the ſufferings of the patient

patient before his tormentors are aware. We may obſerve ſomething like this in our own caſe. In whatever ſufferings or temptations we are, our great Phyſician never departs from us. He is about our bed, and about our path. He obſerves every ſymptom of our diſtreſs, that it may not riſe above our ſtrength. And he cannot be miſtaken concerning us. He knows the ſouls and bodies, which he has given us. He ſees exactly how much we can endure, with our preſent degree of ſtrength. And if this is not ſufficient he can increaſe it, to whatever degree it pleaſes him. Nothing therefore is more certain, than that in conſequence of his wiſdom, as well as his juſtice, mercy and faithfulneſs, he never will, he never can ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able: above the ſtrength which he either hath given already, or will give as ſoon as we need it.

III. 1. *He will with the temptation alſo* (this is the third point we are to conſider) *make a way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.*

The word ἔκβασιν which we render *a way to eſcape*, is extremely ſignificant. The meaning of it is nearly expreſſed by the Engliſh word *out-let*; but more exact by the old word *out-gate*, ſtill frequently uſed by the Scottiſh Writers. It literally means *a way out*. And this God will either find or make; which he that hath all wiſdom, as well as all power in heaven and earth, can never be at a loſs how to do.

2. Either he *makes a way to eſcape* out of the temptation, by removing the occaſion of it, or *in the temptation*: that is, the occaſion remaining as it was, it is a temptation no longer. Firſt, He makes

makes a way to escape out of the temptation, by removing the occasion of it. The histories of mankind, of the Church in particular, afford us numberless instances of this. And many have ocurred in our own memory, and within the little circle of our acquaintance. One of many I think it worth while to relate, as a memorable instance of the faithfulness of God, in making a way to escape out of temptation: *Elizabeth Chadsey*, then living in *London* (whose daughter is living at this day, and is no dishonour to her parent) was advised to administer to her husband, who was supposed to leave much substance behind him. But when a full enquiry into his circumstances was made, it appeared that this supposition was utterly destitute of foundation: and that he not only left nothing at all behind him, but also was very considerably in debt. It was not long after his burial, that a person came to her house and said, "Mrs. *Chadsey*, you are much indebted to your landlord, and he has sent me to demand the rent that is due to him." She answered, "Sir, I have not so much money in the world: indeed I have none at all!" But, said he, have you nothing that will fetch money?" She replied, Sir, you see all that I have. I have nothing in the house, but these six children." "Then, said he, I must execute my writ and carry you to Newgate. But it is a hard case. I will leave you here till to-morrow, and will go and try, if I cannot persuade your landlord to give you time?" He returned the next morning and said, "I have done all I can, I have used all the arguments I could think of, but your landlord is not to be moved. He vows, if I do not carry you to prison without delay, I shall go thither myself." She answered,

answered, "You have done *your* part, The will of the Lord be done!" He said, "I will venture to make one trial more, and will come again in the morning." He came in the morning, and said, "Mrs. *Chadsey*, God has undertaken your cause. None can give you any trouble now: for your landlord died last night. But he has left no will: and no one knows, who is heir to the estate."

3. Thus God is able to deliver out of temptations, by removing the occasion of them. But are there not temptations, the occasions of which cannot be taken away! Is it not a striking instance of this kind, which we have in a late publication? "I was walking (says the Writer of the Letter) over *Dover* Cliffs, in a calm, pleasant evening, with a person whom I tenderly loved, and to whom I was to be married in a few days. While we were engaged in earnest conversation, her foot slipped, she fell down, and I saw her dashed in pieces on the beach. I lifted up my hands, and cried out, "This evil admits of no remedy. I must now go mourning all my days! My wound is incurable. It is impossible I should ever find such another woman! One so every way fitted for me." I added in an agony, "This is such an affliction, as even God himself cannot redress!" And just as I uttered the words I awoke: for it was a dream!" Just so can God remove any possible temptation! Making it like a dream when one waketh!

4. Thus is God able to deliver out of temptation, by taking away the very ground of it. And he is equally able to deliver in the temptation, which is perhaps the greatest deliverance of all. I mean, suffering the occasion to remain as it was,

he

he will take away the bitterneſs of it: ſo that it ſhall not be a temptation at all, but only an occaſion of thankſgiving. How many proofs of this have the children of God, even in their daily experience? How frequently are they encompaſt with trouble? Or viſited with pain or ſickneſs? And when they cry unto the Lord, at ſometimes he takes away the cup from them: he removes the trouble or ſickneſs, or pain: and it is as though it never had been; at other times, he does not make any outward change: outward trouble, or pain, or ſickneſs continue: but the conſolations of the Holy One ſo increaſe, as to over-balance them all. And they can boldly declare

"Labour is reſt, and pain is ſweet,
When thou my God art near."

5. An eminent inſtance of this kind of deliverance is that which occurs in the life of that excellent man, the Marquis *de Renty*. When he was in a violent fit of the Rheumatiſm, a friend aſked him. "Sir, are you in much pain?" He anſwered, "My pains are extreme: but through the mercy of God, I give myſelf up, not to them, but to him." It was in the ſame ſpirit that my own father anſwered, though exhauſted with a ſevere illneſs, (an ulcer in the bowels, which had given him but little reſt day or night, for upwards of ſeven months.) When I aſked, "Sir, are you in pain now?" He anſwered, with a ſtrong and loud voice, "God does indeed chaſten me with pain; yea, all my bones with ſtrong pain. But I thank him for all; I bleſs him for all; I love him for all."

6. We

6. We may observe one more instance of a somewhat similar kind, in the life of the Marquis *de Renty*. When his wife, whom he very tenderly loved, was exceeding ill, and supposed to be near death, a friend took the liberty to enquire, how he felt himself on the occasion? He replied, "I cannot but say, that this trial affects me in the most tender part. I am exquisitely sensible of my loss. I feel more than it is possible to express. And yet I am so satisfied, that the will of God is done, and not the will of a vile sinner, that were it not for fear of giving offence to others, I could dance and sing!" Thus the merciful, the just, the faithful God, will in one way or other, "in every temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it."

7. This whole passage is fruitful of instruction. Some of the lessons which we may learn from it are,

First, "Let him that most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall *into* murmuring:" lest he say in his heart, "Surely no one's case is like mine: no one was ever tried like *me*." Yea, ten thousand. "There has no temptation taken you, *but such as is* common to man:" such as you might reasonably expect, if you considered *what you are*, a sinner born to die, a sinful inhabitant of a mortal body, liable to numberless inward and outward sufferings: and *where you are*, in a shattered, disordered world, surrounded by evil men and evil spirits: consider this, and you will not repine at the common lot, the general condition of humanity.

8. Secondly, Let him that standeth take *heed lest he fall*, lest he *tempt God*, by thinking or saying, "This is insupportable: this is too hard:

I can never get through it; my burden is heavier than I can bear." Not ſo: unleſs ſomething is too hard for God. He will not ſuffer you to be "tempted above that ye are able." He proportions the burden to your ſtrength. If you want more ſtrength, aſk, and it ſhall be given you.

9. Thirdly, "Let him that ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall," leſt he "tempt God by unbelief," by diſtruſting his faithfulneſs. Hath he ſaid, in every temptation he will make away to eſcape? And ſhall he not do it? Yea, verily,

> And far above thy thought
> His counſel ſhall appear,
> When fully he the work hath wrought,
> That cauſed thy needleſs fear.

10. Let us then receive every trial with calm reſignation, and with humble confidence, that he who hath all power, all wiſdom, all mercy and all faithfulneſs, will firſt ſupport us in every temptation, and then deliver us out of all: ſo that in the end, all things ſhall work together for good, and we ſhall happily experience, that all theſe things were for our profit, that we "might be partakers of his holineſs."

SERMON

SERMON LXXXV.

ON PATIENCE.

JAMES i. 4.

Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

1. MY *brethren*, says the Apostle in the preceding verse, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." At first view, this may appear a strange direction; seeing most temptations are, "for the present, not joyous, but grievous." Nevertheless ye know by your own experience, that "the trial of your faith worketh patience:" and if "patience have its perfect work, ye shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

2. It is not to any particular person, or church, that the Apostle gives this instruction; but to all who are partakers of like precious faith, and are seeking after that common salvation. For as long

as any of us are upon earth, we are in the region of temptation. He who came into the world, to save his people from their sins, did not come to save them from temptation. He himself *knew no sin*: yet while he was in the vale of tears, "he suffered, being tempted:" and herein also "left us an example, that we should tread in his steps." We are liable to a thousand temptations, from the corruptible body variously affecting the soul. The soul itself, encompassed as it is with infirmities, exposes us to ten thousand more. And how many are the temptations which we meet with even from the good men, (such at least they are in part, in their general character,) with whom we are called to converse from day to day? Yet what are these to the temptations we may expect to meet with from an evil world? Seeing we all, in effect, "dwell with Mesech, and have our habitations in the tents of Kedar!" Add to this, that the most dangerous of our enemies, are not those that assault us openly. No:

Angels our march oppose,
Who still in strength excel:
Our secret, sworn, eternal foes,
Countless, invisible!

For is not our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion," with all his infernal legions, "still going about seeking whom he may devour?" This is the case with all the children of men. Yea, and with all the children of God, as long as they sojourn in this strange land. Therefore if we do not wilfully and carelessly rush into them, yet we shall surely "fall into divers temptations;" temptations innumerable as the stars of heaven,

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and thofe varied and complicated a thoufand ways. But inftead of counting this a lofs, as unbelievers would do, "count it all joy: knowing that the trial of your faith," even when it is "tried as by fire, worketh patience." But "let patience have its perfect work, and ye fhall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

3. But what is *Patience?* We do not now fpeak of a Heathen Virtue: neither of a natural indolence: but of a gracious temper, wrought in the heart of a believer, by the power of the Holy Ghoft. It is a difpofition to fuffer whatever pleafes God, in the manner, and for the time that pleafes him. We thereby hold the middle way, neither ὀλιγωρεντες' *defpifing* our fufferings, *making little* of them, paffing over them lightly, as if they were owing to chance, or fecond caufes: nor on the other hand ἐκλυόμενοι' affected too much, unnerved, diffolved, finking under them. We may obferve, the proper object of Patience is fuffering, either in body or mind. Patience does not imply the not *feeling* this; it is not Apathy or Infenfibility. It is at the utmoft diftance, from Stoical Stupidity! yea, at an equal diftance from fretfulnefs or dejection. The patient believer is preferved from falling into either of thefe extremes, by confidering who is the Author of all his fuffering, even God his Father: what is the *motive* of his *giving us* to fuffer? Not fo properly his juftice as his love: and what is the *end* of it? Our "profit, that we may be partakers of his holinefs."

4. Very nearly related to Patience is *Meeknefs*; if it be not rather a fpecies of it. For may it not be defined, Patience of Injuries, particularly affronts, reproach or unjuft cenfure. This teaches

not to return evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing. Our blessed Lord himself seems to place a peculiar value upon this temper. This he peculiarly calls us to *learn of* him, if we would *find rest for* our *souls*.

5. But what may we understand by the "work of patience? Let patience have its perfect work." It seems to mean, Let it have its full fruit or effect. And what is the fruit which the Spirit of God is accustomed to produce hereby, in the heart of a believer? One immediate fruit of Patience is *Peace*: a sweet tranquility of mind, a serenity of spirit, which can never be found unless where Patience reigns. And this peace often rises into joy. Even in the midst of various temptations, those that are enabled *in patience* to *possess their souls*, can witness not only quietness of spirit, but triumph and exultation. This both

"Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
And opens in each breast a little heaven."

6. How lively is the account which the Apostle *Peter* gives not only of the peace and joy, but of the hope and love which God works in those patient sufferers, "who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation?" Indeed he appears herein to have an eye to this very passage of St. *James*: "Though ye are grieved for a season with manifold temptations (the very word ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς) that the trial of your faith, (the same expression which was used by St. *James*) may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." See here the peace, the joy, and

and the love, which, through the mighty power of God, are the fruit or *work of patience!*

7. And as peace, hope, joy, and love are the fruits of patience, both ſpringing from, and confirmed by it, ſo is alſo rational, genuine courage, which indeed cannot ſubſiſt without patience. The brutal courage, or rather fierceneſs of a lion, may probaly ſpring from impatience. But true fortitude, the courage of a man, ſprings from juſt the contrary temper. Chriſtian *zeal* is likewiſe confirmed and increaſed by Patience. And ſo is *activity* in every good work: the ſame ſpirit inciting us to be

"Patient in bearing ill, and doing well;"

making us equally willing to do and ſuffer the whole will of God.

8. But what is the *perfect work* of Patience. Is it any thing leſs than the *perfect love of God*, conſtraining us to love every ſoul of man, *even as Chriſt loved us?* Is it not the whole of religion, the whole *mind which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.* Is it not the *renewal of our ſoul in the image of God, after the likeneſs of him that created us?* And is not the fruit of this, the conſtant reſignation of ourſelves, body, and ſpirit to God: entirely giving up all we are, all we have, and all we love, as a holy ſacrifice, acceptable unto God through the Son of his love? It ſeems this is the *perfect work of patience*, conſequent upon the trial of our faith.

9. But how does this work differ from that gracious work which is wrought in every believer, when he firſt finds redemption in the blood of Jeſus, even the remiſſion of his ſins? Many perſons

perſons that are not only upright of heart, but that fear, nay, and love God, have not ſpoken warily upon this head, not according to the oracles of God. They have ſpoken of the work of ſanctification, taking the word in its full ſenſe, as if it were quite of another kind, as if it differed entirely from that which is wrought in juſtification. But this is a great and dangerous miſtake, and has a natural tendency to make us undervalue that glorious work of God, which was wrought in us, when we were juſtified: whereas, in that moment when we are juſtified freely by his grace, when we are accepted through the Beloved, we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit. And there is as great a change wrought in our ſouls when we are born of the Spirit, as was wrought in our bodies when we are born of a woman. There is in that hour a general change, from inward ſinfulneſs, to inward holineſs. The love of the creature is changed to the love of the Creator, the love of the world into the love of God. Earthly deſires, the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, and the pride of life, are in that inſtant changed by the mighty power of God, into heavenly deſires. The whirlwind of our will is ſtopped in its mid career, and ſinks down into the will of God. Pride and haughtineſs ſubſide into lowlineſs of heart: as do anger, with all turbulent and unruly paſſions, into calmneſs, meekneſs and gentleneſs. In a word, the earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh mind, gives place *to the mind that was in Chriſt Jeſus.*

10. "Well but what more than this can be implied in entire ſanctification?" It does not imply any new *kind* of holineſs: let no man imagine this. From the moment we are juſtified, till

till we give up our ſpirits to God, love is the fulfilling of the Law: of the whole Evangelical Law, which took place of the Adamic Law, when the firſt promiſe of *the ſeed of the woman* was made. Love is the ſum of Chriſtian Sanctification: it is the one *kind* of holineſs, which is found, only in various *degrees*, in the believers who are diſtinguiſhed by St. John into *little children*, *young men*, *and fathers*. The difference between one and the other, properly lies in the degree of love. And herein there is as great a difference in the ſpiritual, as in the natural ſenſe, between fathers, young men and babes. Every one that is born of God, though he be as yet only a *babe in Chriſt*, has the love of God, in his heart, the love of his neighbour, together with lowlineſs, meekneſs, and reſignation. But all of theſe are then in a low degree, in proportion to the degree of his faith. The faith of a babe in Chriſt is weak, generally mingled with doubts or fears; with doubts, whether he has not deceived himſelf; or fear, that he ſhall not endure to the end. And if in order to prevent thoſe perplexing doubts, or to remove thoſe tormenting fears, he catches hold of the opinion, that a true believer cannot *make ſhipwreck of the faith*, experience will ſooner or later ſhew, that it is merely the ſtaff of a broken reed, which will be ſo far from ſuſtaining him, that it will only enter into his hand and pierce it. But to return. In the ſame proportion as he grows in faith, he grows in holineſs: he increaſes in love, lowlineſs, meekneſs, in every part of the image of God; till it pleaſes God, after he is thoroughly convinced of inbred ſin, of the total corruption of his nature, to take it all away, to purify his heart and cleanſe him from all unrighteouſneſs:

righteouſneſs: to fulfil that promiſe which he made firſt to his ancient people, and in them to the Iſrael of God in all ages, *I will circumciſe thy heart and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul.* It is not eaſy to conceive, what a difference there is, between that which he experiences now, and that which he experienced before. Till this univerſal change was wrought in his ſoul, all his holineſs was *mixt*. He was humble; but not entirely; his humility was mixt with pride: he was meek; but his meekneſs was frequently interrupted by anger, or ſome uneaſy and turbulent paſſion. His love of God was frequently damped, by the love of ſome creature: the love of his neighbour, by evil ſurmiſing, or ſome thought, if not temper contrary to love. His will was not wholly melted down into the will of God; but although in general he could ſay, "I come *not to do my own will, but the will of him that ſent me*," yet now and then nature rebelled, and he could not clearly ſay, *Lord, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* His whole ſoul is now conſiſtent with itſelf: there is no jarring ſtring; all his paſſions flow in a continual ſtream, with an even tenor to God. To him that is entered into this reſt, you may truly ſay,

"Calm thou ever art within,
All unruffled, all ſerene!"

There is no mixture of any contrary affections: all is peace and harmony after. Being filled with love, there is no more interruption of it, than of the beating of his heart and continual love bringing continual joy in the Lord, he rejoices evermore

more. He converſes continually with the God whom he loves, unto whom in every thing he gives thanks. And as he now loves God with all his heart and with all his ſoul, and with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength, ſo Jeſus now reigns alone in his heart, the Lord of every motion there.

11. But it may be enquired, In what manner does God work this entire, this univerſal change in the ſoul of a believer? This ſtrange work, which ſo many will not believe, though we declare it unto them? Does he work it gradually, by ſlow degrees? Or inſtantaneouſly, in a moment? How many are the diſputes upon this head, even among the children of God. And ſo there will be, after all that ever was, or ever can be ſaid upon it. For many will ſtill ſay, with the famous Jew, *Non perſuadebis, etiamſi perſuaſeris:* that is, *Thou ſhalt not perſuade me, though thou doſt perſuade me.* And they will be more reſolute herein, becauſe the Scriptures are ſilent upon the ſubject; becauſe the point is not determined, at leaſt, not in expreſs terms in any part of the oracles of God. Every man therefore may abound in his own ſenſe, provided he will allow the ſame liberty to his neighbour: provided he will not be angry at thoſe who differ from his opinion, nor entertain hard thoughts concerning them. Permit me likewiſe to add one thing more. Be the change inſtantaneous or gradual, ſee that you never reſt till it is wrought in your own ſoul, if you deſire to dwell with God in glory.

12. This premiſed, in order to throw what light I can upon this intereſting queſtion, I will ſimply relate what I have ſeen myſelf in the courſe of many years. Four or five and forty years ago when

when I had no distinct views of what the Apostle meant, by exhorting us to *leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ*, and *go on to perfection*: two or three persons in *London*, whom I knew to be truly sincere, desired to give me an account of their experience. It appeared exceeding strange, being different from any that I had heard before: but exactly similar to the preceding account of entire sanctification. The next year, two or three more persons at *Bristol*, and two or three in *Kingswood* coming to me severally, gave me exactly the same account of their experience. A few years after, I desired all those in *London*, who made the same profession, to come to me all together at the *Foundery*, that I might be thoroughly satisfied. I desired that man of God, *Thomas Walsh*, to give us the meeting there. When we met, first one of us and then the other, asked them the most searching questions we could devise. They answered every one without hesitation, and with the utmost simplicity, so that we were fully persuaded, they did not deceive themselves. In the years 1759, 1760, 1761, and 1762, their numbers multiplied exceedingly, not only in *London* and *Bristol*, but in various parts of *Ireland* as well as *England*. Not trusting to the testimony of others, I carefully examined most of these myself: and in *London* alone, I found six hundred and fifty-two members of our Society, who were exceeding clear in their experience, and of whose testimony I could see no reason to doubt. I believe no year has passed since that time, wherein God has not wrought the same work in many others; but sometimes in one part of *England* or *Ireland*, sometimes in another; as *the wind bloweth where it listeth*: and every one of these (after

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the moſt careful enquiry, I have not found one exception, either in *Great-Britain* or *Ireland*, has declared that his deliverence from ſin was *inſtantaneous*, that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of theſe, or one third, or one in twenty, declared it was *gradually* wrought in *them*, I ſhould have believed this, with regard to *them*, and thought that *ſome* were gradually ſanctified and ſome inſtantaneouſly. But as I have not found in ſo long a ſpace of time, a ſingle perſon ſpeaking thus: as all who believe they are ſanctified, declare with one voice, that the change was wrought in a moment; I cannot but believe, that ſanctification is commonly, if not always, an *inſtantaneous* work.

13. But however that queſtion be decided, whether ſanctification, in the full ſenſe of the word, be wrought inſtantaneouſly or gradually, how may *we* attain to it? *What ſhall we do*, ſaid the Jews to our Lord, *that we work the works of God?* His anſwer will ſuit thoſe that aſk, What ſhall we do that this work of God may be wrought in us? "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent." On this one work all the others depend. Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and all his wiſdom, power, and faithfulneſs are engaged on thy ſide. In this as in all other inſtances, "by grace we are ſaved through faith." Sanctification too is "not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt. It is the gift of God," and is to be received by plain, ſimple faith. Suppoſe you are now labouring to "abſtain from all appearance of evil, zealous of good works," and walking diligently and carefully in all the ordinances of God; there is then only one point remaining: the voice of God to your

ſoul is, "Believe and be ſaved." * Firſt, Believe that God has promiſed to ſave you from all ſin, and to fill you with all holineſs. Secondly, Believe that he is *able* thus "to ſave to the uttermoſt all thoſe that come unto God through him." Thirdly, Believe that he is *willing*, as well as able, to ſave *you* to the uttermoſt; to purify you from all ſin, and fill up all your heart with love. Believe, fourthly, that he is not only able, but willing to do it *now!* Not when you come to die; not at any diſtant time; not to-morrow, but *to-day*. He will then enable you to believe, *it is done*, according to his word. And then "patience ſhall have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

14. Ye ſhall then be *perfect*. The Apoſtle ſeems to mean by this expreſſion, τελειοι. Ye ſhall be wholly delivered from every evil work, from every evil word, from every ſinful thought: yea, from every evil deſire, paſſion, temper; from all inbred corruption, from all remains of the carnal mind, from the body of ſin: and ye ſhall be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind, in every right temper, after the image of him that created you, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. Ye ſhall be *entire*, ολοκληροι. (The ſame word which the Apoſtle uſes to the Chriſtians in *Theſſalonica*.) This ſeems to refer, not ſo much to the kind, as to the degree of holineſs. As if he had ſaid, "Ye ſhall enjoy as high a degree of holineſs, as is conſiſtent with your preſent ſtate of pilgrimage." And ye ſhall *want nothing*; the Lord being your Shepherd, your Father, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier, your God, and your all, will feed you with

* See the Sermon on, The Way of Salvation.

with the bread of heaven, and give you meat enough. He will lead you forth beſide the waters of comfort, and *keep you every moment:* ſo that loving him with all your heart (which is the ſum of all perfection) you will *rejoice evermore; pray without ceaſing*, and *in every thing give thanks, till an abundant entrance is miniſtered unto you, into his everlaſting kingdom!*

SERMON LXXXVI.

The Important Question.

MATT. xvi. 26.

What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.

1. THERE is a celebrated remark to this effect, (I think in the works of Mr. Pascal) that if a man of low estate would speak of high things, as of what relates to kings or kingdoms, it is not easy for him to find suitable expressions, as he is so little acquainted with things of this nature. But if one of royal parentage speaks of royal things, of what concerns his own or his father's kingdom, his language will be free and easy, as these things are familiar to his thoughts. In like manner, if a mere inhabitant of this lower world speaks concerning the great things of the kingdom of God, hardly is he able to find expressions suitable to the greatness of the subject. But

But when the Son of God ſpeaks of the higheſt things, which concern his heavenly kingdom, all his language is eaſy and unlaboured, his words natural and unaffected: inaſmuch as known unto him are all theſe things from all eternity.

2. How ſtrongly is this remark exemplified in the paſſage now before us! The Son of God, the great King of heaven and earth, here uſes the plaineſt and eaſieſt words: but how high and deep are the things which he expreſſes therein? None of the children of men can fully conceive them, till immerging out of the darkneſs of the preſent world, he commences an inhabitant of eternity.

3. But we may conceive a little of theſe deep things, if we conſider, Firſt, What is implied in that expreſſion, a man's "gaining the whole world:" Secondly, What is implied in "loſing his own ſoul:" we ſhall then, Thirdly, ſee in the ſtrongeſt light, *What* he is *profited*, who *gains the whole world*, and *loſes his own ſoul*.

I. 1. We are firſt, to conſider, What is implied in a man's *gaining the whole world*. Perhaps at the firſt hearing, this may ſeem to ſome equivalent with conquering the whole world. But it has no relation thereto at all: and indeed that expreſſion involves a plain abſurdity. For it is impoſſible, any that is born of a woman ſhould ever conquer the whole world; were it only becauſe the ſhort life of man could not ſuffice for ſo wild an undertaking. Accordingly, no man ever did conquer the half, no, nor the tenth part of the world. But whatever others might do, there was no danger that any of our Lord's hearers ſhould have any thought of this. Among

all the ſins of the Jewiſh nation, the deſire of univerſal empire was not found. Even in their moſt flouriſhing times, they never fought to extend their conqueſts beyond the river Euphrates. And in our Lord's time, all their ambition was at an end: *the ſceptre was departed from Judah:* and Judea was governed by a Roman procurator, as a branch of the Roman empire.

2. Leaving this, we may find a far more eaſy and natural ſenſe of the expreſſion. To gain the whole world, may properly enough imply, to gain all the pleaſures which the world can give. The man we ſpeak of, may therefore be ſuppoſed to have gained all that will gratify his ſenſes. In particular, all that can increaſe his pleaſure of tafting, all the elegancies of meat and drink. Likewiſe, whatever can gratify his ſmell, or touch: all that he can enjoy in common with his fellow-brutes. He may have all the plenty, and all the variety of theſe objects which the world can afford.

3. We may farther ſuppoſe him to have gained all that gratifies *the deſire of the eyes;* whatever, (by means of the eye chiefly) conveys any pleaſure to the imagination. The pleaſures of imagination ariſe from three ſources, grandeur, beauty, and novelty. Accordingly we find by experience, our own imagination is gratified by ſurveying either grand, or beautiful, or uncommon objects. Let him be encompaſſed then with the moſt grand, the moſt beautiful, and the neweſt things that can any where be found. For all this is manifeſtly implied in a man's gaining the whole world.

4. But there is alſo another thing implied herein, which men of the moſt elevated ſpirits have preferred before all the pleaſures of ſenſe and of imagination

imagination put together; that is honor, glory, renown:

Virûm volitare per ora.

It seems, that hardly any principle of the human mind is of greater force than this. It triumphs over the strongest propensities of nature, over all our appetites and affections. If Brutus sheds the blood of his own children; if we see another Brutus, in spite of every possible obligation, in defiance of all justice and gratitude,

"Cringing while he stabs his friend;"

if a far greater man than either of these, Paschal Paoli, gave up ease, pleasure, every thing, for a life of constant toil, pain, and alarms: what principle could support them? They might talk of *amor patriæ*, the love of their country; but this would never have carried them through, had there not been also the

Laudum immensa cupido;

the immense thirst of *praise*. Now the man we speak of, has gained abundance of this; he is praised, if not admired, by all that are round about him. Nay, his name is gone forth into distant lands, as it were to the ends of the earth.

5. Add to this, that he has gained abundance of wealth; that there is no end of his treasures; that he has laid up silver as the dust, and gold as the sand of the sea. Now when a man has obtained all these pleasures, all that will gratify either the senses or the imagination; when he has gained an honourable name, and also laid up much treasure for many years; then he may be said, in

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an eafy, natural ſenſe of the word, to have *gained the whole world.*

II. 1. The next point we have to conſider is, What is implied in a man's *loſing his own ſoul?* But here we draw a deeper ſcene, and have need of a more ſteady attention. For it is eaſy to ſum up all that is implied in a man's *gaining the whole world.* But it is not eaſy to underſtand all that is implied in his *loſing his own ſoul.* Indeed none can fully conceive this, until he has paſſed through time into eternity.

2. The firſt thing which it undeniably implies, is the loſing all the preſent pleaſures of religion; all thoſe which it affords to truly religious men, even in the preſent life. "If there be any conſolation in Chriſt; if any comfort of love," in the love of God, and of all mankind; if any "joy in the Holy Ghoſt;" if there be a peace of God, a peace that paſſeth all underſtanding; if there be any rejoicing in the teſtimony of a good conſcience toward God; it is manifeſt, all this is totally loſt, by the man that loſes his own ſoul.

3. But the preſent life will ſoon be at an end: we know it paſſes away like a ſhadow. The hour is at hand, when the ſpirit will be ſummoned to return to God that gave it. In that awful moment,

"Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
Who ſtand upon the threſhold of the new."

And whether he looks backward or forward, how pleaſing is the proſpect to him that ſaves his ſoul! If he looks back, he has "The calm remembrance of a life well ſpent." If he looks forward, there

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is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and he fees the convoy of angels ready to carry him into Abraham's bofom. But how is it in that folemn hour, with the man that *lofes* his foul? Does he look back? What comfort is there in this? He fees nothing but fcenes of horror, matter of fhame, remorfe, and felf-condemnation, a foretafte of *the worm that never dieth.* If he looks forward, what does he fee? No joy, no peace! No gleam of hope from any point of heaven! Some years fince, one who turned back as a dog to his vomit, was ftruck in his mid career of fin. A friend vifiting him, prayed, "Lord, have mercy upon thofe who are juft ftepping out of the body, and know not which fhall meet them at their entrance into the other world, an angel or a fiend." The fick man fhrieked out with a piercing cry, "A fiend! a fiend!" and died. Juft fuch an end, unlefs he die like an ox, may any man expect, who lofes his own foul.

4. But in what fituation is the fpirit of a good man, at his entrance into eternity? See,

> "The convoy attends,
> The miniftring hoft of invifible friends:"

they receive the new born fpirit, and conduct him fafe into Abraham's bofom, into the delights of paradife, the garden of God, where the light of his countenance perpetually fhines. It is but one of a thoufand commendations of this anti-chamber of heaven, That "there the wicked ceafe from troubling, there the weary are at reft." For there they have numberlefs fources of happinefs, which they could not have upon earth. There

There they meet with "the glorious dead of ancient days." They converſe with Adam, firſt of men; with Noah, firſt of the new world; with Abraham the friend of God; with Moſes and the Prophets; with the Apoſtles of the Lamb; with the ſaints of all ages; and above all they *are with Chriſt*.

5. How different alas! is the caſe with him who loſes his own ſoul? The moment he ſteps into eternity, he meets with the devil and his angels. Sad convoy, into the world of ſpirits! Sad earneſt of what is to come! And either he is bound with chains of darkneſs, and reſerved unto the judgment of the great day; or, at beſt, he wanders up and down, ſeeking reſt but finding none. Perhaps he may ſeek it (like the *unclean ſpirit caſt out of the man*) in dry, dreary, deſolate places: perhaps

"Where Nature all in ruins lies,
And owns her ſovereign, Death!"

And little comfort can he find here! ſeeing every thing contributes to increaſe, not remove, the fearful expectation of fiery indignation which will devour the ungodly.

6. For even this is to him but the beginning of ſorrows. Yet a little while, and he will ſee "the great white throne coming down from heaven, and him that ſitteth thereon, from whoſe face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them." And "the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God, and are judged, every one according to his works. Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his right hand, (*God grant he may ſo to you!*) Come, ye bleſſed

of

of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And the angels ſhall tune their harps and ſing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors, that the heirs of glory may come in. *And then ſhall they* ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever."

7. How different will be the lot of him that loſes his own ſoul! No joyful ſentence will be pronounced on him, but one that will pierce him through with unutterable horror, (God forbid, that ever it ſhould be pronounced on any of you that are here before God!) "Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" And who can doubt, but thoſe infernal ſpirits will immediately execute the ſentence, will inſtantly drag thoſe forſaken of God into their own place of torment! Into thoſe

"Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades; where joy,
Where peace can never come! Hope never comes,
That comes to all,"

all the children of men who are on this ſide eternity. But not to them: the gulph is now fixt, over which they cannot paſs. From the moment wherein they are once plunged into the lake of fire, burning with brimſtone, their torments are not only without intermiſſion, but likewiſe without end. "For they have no reſt, day or night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever."

III. Upon ever ſo curſory a view of theſe things, would not any one be aſtoniſhed, that a man,

man, that a creature endued with reason, should voluntarily choose, I say *choose*; for God forces no man into inevitable damnation: he never yet

"Consigned one unborn soul to hell,
Or damned him from his mother's womb:"

should choose thus to lose his own soul, though it were to gain the whole world! For what shall a man be profited thereby upon the whole of the account?

But a little to abate our astonishment at this, let us observe the suppositions which a man generally makes, before he can reconcile himself to this fatal choice.

1. He supposes, first, "That a life of religion is a life of misery." That religion is misery! How is it possible, that any one should entertain so strange a thought? Do any of *you* imagine this? If you do, the reason is plain; you know not what religion is. "No! But I do, as well as you." What is it then? "Why, the doing no harm." Not so: many birds and beasts do no harm; yet they are not capable of religion. "Then it is going to Church and sacrament." Indeed it is not. This may be an excellent help to religion; and every one who desires to save his soul, should attend them at all opportunities: yet it is possible, you may attend them all your days, and still have no religion at all. Religion is a higher and deeper thing, than any outward ordinance whatever.

2. "What is religion then?" It is easy to answer, if we consult the oracles of God. According to these, it lies in one single point: it is neither more nor less than love: it is love which

"is

" is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment." Religion is the love of God and our neighbour; that is, every man under heaven. This love ruling the whole life, animating all our tempers and paſſions, directing all our thoughts, words, and actions, is " pure religion and undefiled."

3. Now will any one be ſo hardy as to ſay, that love is miſery? Is it miſery to love God? to give him my heart, who alone is worthy of it? Nay, it is the trueſt happineſs, indeed the only true happineſs which is to be found under the ſun. So does all experience prove the juſtneſs of that reflection which was made long ago, " Thou haſt made us for thyſelf; and our heart cannot reſt, until it reſteth in thee." Or does any one imagine, the love of our neighbour is miſery, even the loving every man as our own ſoul? So far from it, that next to the love of God, this affords the greateſt happineſs of which we are capable. Therefore

" Let not the ſtoic boaſt his mind unmov'd,
The brute-philoſopher, who ne'er has prov'd
The joy of loving, or of being lov'd."

4. So much every reaſonable man muſt allow. But he may object, " There is more than this implied in religion. It implies not only the love of God and man, (againſt which I have no objection) but alſo a great deal of doing and ſuffering. And how can this be conſiſtent with happineſs?

There is certainly ſome truth in this objection. Religion does imply both doing and ſuffering. Let us then calmly conſider, whether this impairs or heightens our happineſs.

Religion implies, firſt, the doing many things. For the love of God will naturally lead us, at all opportunities to converſe with him we love; to ſpeak to him in (public or private) prayer, and to hear the words of his mouth, which "are dearer to us than thouſands of gold and ſilver." It will incline us to loſe no opportunity of receiving

"The dear memorial of our dying Lord:"

to continue inſtant in thankſgiving; at morning, evening and noon-day to praiſe him. But ſuppoſe we do all this, will it leſſen our happineſs? Juſt the reverſe. It is plain all theſe fruits of love are means of increaſing the love from which they ſpring; and of conſequence they increaſe our happineſs in the ſame proportion. Who then would not join in that wiſh,

"Riſing to ſing my Saviour's praiſe,
Thee may I publiſh all day long;
And let thy precious word of grace
Flow from my heart, and fill my tongue;
Fill all my life with pureſt love,
And join me to thy church above!"

5. It muſt alſo be allowed, that as the love of God naturally leads to works of piety, ſo the love of our neighbour naturally leads all that feel it, to works of mercy. It inclines us to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to viſit them that are ſick or in priſon: to be as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; an huſband to the widow, a father to the fatherleſs. But can you ſuppoſe, that the doing this will prevent or leſſen your happineſs? Yea, though you did ſo much,

as

as to be like a guardian-angel to all that are round about you? On the contrary, it is an infallible truth, that

"All worldly joys are leſs
Than that one joy of doing kindneſſes."

A man of pleaſure was aſked ſome years ago, "Captain, what was the greateſt pleaſure you ever had?" After a little pauſe he replied, "When we were upon our march in Ireland, in a very hot day, I called at a cabin on the road, and deſired a little water. The woman brought me a cup of milk. I gave her a piece of ſilver; and the joy that poor creature expreſſed, gave me the greateſt pleaſure I ever had in my life." Now if the doing good gave ſo much pleaſure to one who acted merely from natural generoſity, how much more muſt it give to one who does it on a nobler principle, the joint love of God and his neighbour? It remains that the doing all which religion requires, will not leſſen, but immenſely increaſe our happineſs.

6. "Perhaps this alſo may be allowed. But religion implies, according to the Chriſtian account, not only doing, but *ſuffering*. And how can ſuffering be conſiſtent with happineſs?" Perfectly well. Many centuries ago it was remarked by St. Chryſoſtom, "The Chriſtian has his ſorrows, as well as his joys: but his ſorrow is ſweeter than joy." He may accidentally ſuffer loſs, poverty, pain: but in all theſe things he is more than conqueror: he can teſtify,

Labour is reſt, and pain is ſweet,
While thou my God art here.

He can say, "The Lord gave; the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord!" He *must* suffer, more or less, reproach: for "the servant is not above his master;" but so much the more does the Spirit of glory and of Christ rest upon him. Yea, love itself will on several occasions be the source of suffering: the love of God will frequently produce

"The pleasing smart,
The meltings of a broken heart."

And the love of our neighbour will give rise to sympathizing sorrow: it will lead us to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction; to be tenderly concerned for the distressed, and "to mix our pitying tear with those that weep." But may we not well say, these are "Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven?" So far then are all these sufferings from either preventing or lessening our happiness, that they greatly contribute thereto, and indeed constitute no inconsiderable part of it. So that, upon the whole, there cannot be a more false supposition, than that a life of religion is a life of misery; seeing true religion, whether considered in its nature or its fruits, is true and solid happiness.

7. The man who chooses to gain the world by the loss of his soul, supposes, secondly, "That a life of wickedness is a life of happiness!" That wickedness is happiness! Even an old heathen poet could have taught him better. Even Juvenal discovered.

Nemo malus felix:

no wicked man is happy! And how expressly does God himself declare, "There is no peace to the

the wicked:" no peace of mind; and without this, there can be no happineſs.

But not to avail ourſelves of authority, let us weigh the thing in the balance of reaſon. I aſk, What can make a wicked man happy? You anſwer, He has gained the whole world. We allow it: and what does this imply? He has gained all that gratifies the ſenſes: in particular, all that can pleaſe the taſte: all the delicacies of meat and drink. True; but can eating and drinking make a man happy? They never did yet; and certain it is, they never will. This is too coarſe food for an immortal ſpirit. But ſuppoſe it did give him a poor kind of happineſs, during thoſe moments wherein he was ſwallowing; what will he do with the reſidue of his time? will it not hang heavy upon his hands? will he not groan under many a tedious hour, and think ſwift winged time flies too ſlow? If he is not fully employed, will he not frequently complain of lowneſs of ſpirits? an unmeaning expreſſion, which the miſerable phyſician uſually no more underſtands, than his miſerable patient. We know, there are ſuch things as nervous diſorders. But we know likewiſe, that what is commonly called *nervous lowneſs*, is a ſecret reproof from God, a kind of conſciouſneſs, that we are not in our place; that we are not as God would have us to be; we are unhinged from our proper centre.

8. To remove or at leaſt ſooth this ſtrange uneaſineſs, let him add the pleaſures of imagination. Let him dreſs himſelf with ſilver and gold, and adorn himſelf with all the colours of the rainbow. Let him build ſplendid palaces, and furniſh them in the moſt elegant, as well as coſtly manner. Let him lay out walks and gardens,

beautified with all that nature and art can afford. And how long will these give him pleasure? Only as long as they are new. As soon as ever the novelty is gone, the pleasure is gone also. After he has surveyed them a few months, or years, they give him no more satisfaction. The man who is saving his soul, has the advantage of him in this very respect. For he can say,

"In the pleasures the rich man's possessions display,
Unenvied I challenge my part;
While ev'ry fair object my eye can survey,
Contributes to gladden my heart."

9. "However he has yet another resource: applause, glory. And will not this make him happy?" It will not: for he cannot be applauded by all men; no man ever was. Some will praise: perhaps many; but not all. It is certain, some will blame: and he that is fond of applause, will feel more pain from the censure of one, than pleasure from the praise of many. So that whoever seeks happiness in applause, will infallibly be disappointed, and will find, upon the whole of the account, abundantly more pain than pleasure.

10. But to bring the matter to a short issue. Let us take an instance of one, who had gained more of this world than probably any man now alive, unless he be a sovereign prince. But did all he had gained, make him happy? Answer for thyself. Then said Haman, Yet "all this profiteth me nothing, while I see Mordecai sitting in the gate." Poor Haman! One unholy temper, whether pride, envy, jealousy, or revenge, gave him

him more pain, more vexation of ſpirit, than all the world could give pleaſure. And ſo it muſt be in the nature of things; for all unholy tempers are unhappy tempers. Ambition, covetouſneſs, vanity, inordinate affection, malice, revengefulneſs, carry their own puniſhment with them, and avenge themſelves on the ſoul wherein they dwell. Indeed what are theſe, more eſpecially when they are combined with an awakened conſcience, but the dogs of hell already gnawing the ſoul, forbidding happineſs to approach! Did not even the Heathens ſee this? What elſe means their fable of Tityus, chained to a rock with a vulture continually tearing up his breaſt, and feeding upon his liver? *Quid rides?* Why do you ſmile? Says the poet,

Mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur.

It is another name. But thou art the man! Luſt, fooliſh deſire, envy, malice, or anger, is now tearing thy breaſt: love of money, or of praiſe, hatred, or revenge, is now feeding on thy poor ſpirit. Such happineſs is in vice! So vain is the ſuppoſition that a life of wickedneſs is a life of happineſs!

11. But he makes a third ſuppoſition, "That he ſhall certainly live forty or fifty or threeſcore years." Do *you* depend upon this? on living threeſcore years? Who told you that you ſhould? It is no other than the enemy of God and man: it is the murderer of ſouls. Believe him not: he was a liar from the beginning; from the beginning of his rebellion againſt God. He is eminently a liar in this; for he would not give you life,

life, if he could. Would God permit, he would make ſure work, and juſt now hurry you to his own place. And he cannot give you life, if he would: the breath of man is not in his hands. He is not the diſpoſer of life and death: that power belongs to the Moſt High. It is poſſible indeed, God may, on ſome occaſions, permit him to inflict death. I do not know, but it was an evil angel who ſmote an hundred, four-ſcore and five thouſand Aſſyrians in one night: and the fine lines of our poet are as applicable to an evil, as to a good ſpirit:

"So when an angel by divine command,
Hurls death and terror o'er a guilty land—
He, pleas'd th' Almighty's order to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the ſtorm."

But though Satan may ſometimes inflict death, I know not that he could ever give life. It was one of his moſt faithful ſervants, that ſhrieked out ſome years ago, "A week's life! A week's life! Thirty thouſand pounds for a week's life!" But he could not purchaſe a day's life. That night God required his ſoul of him! And how ſoon may he require it of *you?* Are you ſure of living threeſcore years? Are you ſure of living one year? one week? one day? O make haſte to live! Surely the man that may die to-night, ſhould live to-day.

12. So abſurd are all the ſuppoſitions made by him, who gains the world, and loſes his ſoul! But let us for a moment imagine, that wickedneſs is happineſs, and that he ſhall certainly live threeſcore years; and ſtill I would aſk, *What is he profited*, if he gain the whole world for three ſcore years and then loſe his ſoul eternally?

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Can such a choice be made by any that considers what eternity is? Philip Melancthon, the most learned of all the German reformers, gives the following relation. (I pass no judgment upon it, but set it down nearly in his own words.) "When I was at Wirtemberg, as I was walking out one summer-evening with several of my fellow-students, we heard an uncommon singing, and following the sound, saw a bird of an uncommon figure. One stepping up, asked, In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what art thou? It answered, I am a damned spirit: and in vanishing away pronounced these words, O Eternity, Eternity! who can tell the length of Eternity!" And how soon would this be the language of him, who sold his soul for three score years' pleasure! How soon would he cry out, "O Eternity, Eternity! who can tell the length of Eternity!"

13. In how striking a manner is this illustrated by one of the ancient fathers? "Suppoting there was a ball of sand as big as the whole earth. Suppose a grain of this to be annihilated in a thousand years: which would be more eligible, to be happy, while this ball was wasting away at the rate of one grain in a thousand years, and miserable ever after? Or to be miserable, while it is wasting away at that proportion, and happy ever after?" A wise man, it is certain, could not pause one moment upon the choice; seeing all that time wherein this ball would be wasting away, bears infinitely less proportion to eternity, than a drop of water to the whole ocean, or a grain of sand to the whole mass. Allowing then that a life of religion were a life of misery, that a life of wickedness were a life of happiness, and that a man were assured of enjoying that happiness for the term of threescore

threescore years: yet what would he be profited, if he were then to be miserable to all eternity?

14. But it has been proved, that the case is quite otherwise, That religion is happiness, that wickedness is misery, and that no man is assured of living threescore days: and if so, is there any fool, any madman under heaven who can be compared to him, that casts away his own soul, though it were to gain the whole world? For what is the real state of the case? What is the choice which God proposes to his creatures? It is not, "Will you be happy threescore years, and then miserable for ever: or, will you be miserable threescore years, and then happy for ever?" It is not, "Will you have first a temporary heaven, and then hell eternal: or, will you have first a temporary hell, and then heaven eternal?" But it is simply this: will you be miserable threescore years, and miserable ever after: or, will you be happy threescore years, and happy ever after? Will you have a foretaste of heaven now, and then heaven for ever: or will you have a foretaste of hell now, and then hell for ever? Will you have two hells, or two heavens?

15. One would think there needed no great sagacity, to answer this question. And this is the very question which I now propose to *you* in the name of God. Will you be happy here and hereafter; in the world that now is, and in that which is to come? Or will you be miserable here and hereafter, in time and in eternity? What is your choice? Let there be no delay: now take one or the other. I take heaven and earth to record this day, that I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. O choose life! The life of peace and love now; the life of glory

glory for ever. By the grace of God now chooſe that better part, which ſhall never be taken from you. And having once fixed your choice, never draw back: adhere to it at all events. Go on in the name of the Lord, whom ye have choſen, and in the power of his might! In ſpite of all oppoſition, from nature, from the world, from all the powers of darkneſs, ſtill fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life! And then there is laid up for you a crown, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give you at that day!

SERMON

SERMON LXXXVII.

On working out our own Salvation.

Philippians ii. 12, 13.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

1. SOME great Truths, as the Being and Attributes of God, and the difference between Moral Good and Evil, were known in some measure to the Heathen world; the traces of them are to be found in all nations: so that in some sense it may be said to every child of man, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; even to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." With this truth he has in some measure "enlightened every one that cometh into the world." And hereby they that *have not the law*, that have no written law, *are a law unto themselves.*

themſelves. They ſhew *the work of the law*, the ſubſtance of it, though not the letter, *written in their hearts*, by the ſame hand which wrote the commandments on the tables of ſtone: "their conſcience alſo bearing them witneſs," whether they act ſuitably thereto or not.

2. But there are two grand heads of doctrine, which contain many truths of the moſt important nature, of which the moſt enlightened Heathens in the ancient world were totally ignorant; as are alſo the moſt intelligent Heathens, that are now on the face of the earth: I mean thoſe which relate to the eternal Son of God; and the Spirit of God; to the Son, giving himſelf to be "a propitiation for the ſins of the world;" and to the Spirit of God, renewing men in that image of God wherein they were created. For after all the pains which ingenious and learned men have taken, that great man, the Chevalier *Ramſay* in particular, to find ſome reſemblance of theſe truths, in the immenſe rubbiſh of Heathen Authors, the reſemblance is ſo exceeding faint as not to be diſcerned but by a very lively imagination. Beſide that even this reſemblance, faint, as it was, is only to be found in the diſcourſes of a very few, and thoſe were the moſt improved and deeply thinking men, in their ſeveral generations: while the innumerable multitudes that ſurrounded them, were little better for the knowledge of the Philoſophers; but remained as totally ignorant even of theſe capital truths, as were the beaſts that periſh.

3. Certain it is, that theſe truths were never known to the vulgar, the bulk of mankind, to the generality of men in any nation, till they

were brought to light by the gospel. Notwithstanding a spark of knowledge glimmering here and there, the whole earth was covered with darkness, till the Sun of Righteousness arose and scattered the shades of night. Since this Day-spring from on high has appeared, a great light hath shined unto those, who till then, sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. And thousands of them in every age have known, "that God so loved the world, *as to* give his only Son, to the end that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish but have everlasting life." And being entrusted with the oracles of God, they have known that "God hath given us his Holy Spirit, *who* worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

4. How remarkable are those words of the Apostle, which precede these? "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God," the incommunicable nature of God from eternity, "counted it not a act of robbery," (that is the precise meaning of the word, no invasion of any other's prerogative; but his own unquestionable right, "to be equal with God." The word implies both the *fulness* and the supreme *height* of the Godhead. To which are opposed the words, he *emptied*, and he *humbled himself*. He *emptied himself* of that divine fulness, veiled his fulness from the eyes of men and angels, *taking*, and by that very act emptying himself, "the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man," a real man like other men. "And being found in fashion as a man," a common man, without any peculiar beauty or excellency, *he humbled himself* to a still greater degree, *becoming obedient* to

to God, though equal with him "even unto death, yea, the death of the croſs," the greateſt inſtance both of humiliation and obedience.

Having propoſed the example of Chriſt, the Apoſtle exhorts them to ſecure the ſalvation which Chriſt hath purchaſed for them, "Wherefore work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure."

In theſe comprehenſive words we may obſerve,

Firſt, That grand truth, which ought never to be out of our remembrance, "It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure:"

Secondly, The improvement we ought to make of it, "Work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling:"

Thirdly, The connexion between them: "It is God that worketh in you: therefore work out your own ſalvation."

I. 1. Firſt we are to obſerve that great and important truth which ought never to be out of our remembrance, "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure." The meaning of theſe words may be made more plain, by a ſmall tranſpoſition of them. "It is God that of his good pleaſure worketh in you both to will and to do." This poſition of the words, connecting the phraſe "of his good pleaſure" with the word *worketh*, removes all imagination of merit from man, and gives God the whole glory of his work. Otherwiſe we might have had ſome room for boaſting, as if it were our own deſert, ſome goodneſs in us, or ſome good

thing done by us, which firſt moved God to work. But this expreſſion cuts off all ſuch vain conceits, and clearly ſhews, his motive to work lay wholly in himſelf: in his own mere grace, in his unmerited mercy.

2. It is by this alone he is impelled to work in man both to will and to do. The expreſſion is capable of two interpretations; both of which are unqueſtionably true. Firſt, *To will*, may include the whole of inward; *to do*, the whole of outward religion. And if it be thus underſtood, it implies, That it is God that worketh both inward and outward holineſs. Secondly, *To will*, may imply every good deſire; *to do*, whatever reſults therefrom. And then the ſentence means, God breathes into us every good deſire, and brings every good deſire into effect.

3. The original words τὸ θέλειν and τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ſeem to favour the latter conſtruction: τὸ θέλειν, which we render *to will*, plainly including every good deſire, whether relating to our tempers, words, or actions; to inward or outward holineſs. And τὸ ἐνεργεῖν, which we render *to do*, manifeſtly implies all that power from on high; all that energy which works in us every right diſpoſition, and then furniſhes us for every good word and work.

4. Nothing can ſo directly tend to hide pride from man, as a deep, laſting conviction of this. For if we are thoroughly ſenſible, that we have nothing which we have not received, how can we glory as if we had not received it. If we know and feel, that the very firſt motion of good is from above, as well as the power which conducts it to the end: if it is God that not only infuſes every

every good desire, but that accompanies and follows it, else it vanishes away; then it evidently follows, that *he who glorieth must glory in the Lord.*

II. 1. Proceed we now to the second point. If God *work-th in you*, then *work out your own salvation.* The original word rendered, *Work out*, implies the doing a thing thoroughly. *Your own*—for you yourselves must do this, or it will be left undone for ever. Your *own salvation*—Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) *Preventing Grace*; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight, transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation, the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by *Convincing Grace*, usually in scripture termed *Repentance*, which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian Salvation, whereby *through grace*, we *are saved by faith*, consisting of these two grand branches, Justification and Sanctification. By Justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God: by Sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience as well as scripture shew this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified, in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God and man. It gradually increases from that moment, as a

grain of mustard-seed, which at first is the least of all seeds, but afterwards *puts forth large branches*, and becomes a great tree; till in another instant the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till we "grow up in all things into him that is our head, till we attain the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

2. But how are we to *work out* this salvation? The Apostle answers, *With fear and trembling.* There is another passage of St *Paul* wherein the same expression occurs, which may give light to this. *Servants, obey your masters according to the flesh*; according to the present state of things, although sensible that in a little time, the servant will be free from his master, *with fear and trembling.* This is a proverbial expression, which cannot be understood literally. For what master could bear, much less require his servant, to stand trembling and quaking before him? And the following words utterly exclude this meaning: *In singleness of heart*, with a single eye to the will and providence of God, *Not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart:* doing whatever they do as the will of God, and therefore with their might, Eph. vi. v. 5, &c. It is easy to see, that these strong expressions of the Apostle clearly imply two things: First, that every thing be done with the utmost earnestness of spirit, and with all care and caution; (perhaps more directly referring to the former word μετὰ φόβου *with fear*) Secondly, that it be done with the utmost diligence, speed, punctuality and exactness: not improbably

probably referring to the latter word μετὰ τρόμου *with trembling*,

3. How eaſily may we transfer this to the buſineſs of life, the working out our own ſalvation? With the ſame temper, and in the ſame manner that Chriſtian ſervants ſerve their maſters that are upon earth, let other Chriſtians labour to ſerve their Maſter that is in heaven: that is, Firſt, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs of ſpirit, with all poſſible care and caution, and Secondly, with the utmoſt diligence, ſpeed, punctuality and exactneſs.

4. But what are the ſteps which the ſcriptures direct us to take, in the working out of our own ſalvation? The Prophet *Iſaiah* gives us a general anſwer, touching the firſt ſteps which we are to take, *Ceaſe to do evil; learn to do well.* If ever you deſire that God ſhould work in you that faith, whereof cometh both preſent and eternal ſalvation, by the grace already given, fly from all ſin as from the face of a ſerpent: carefully avoid every evil word and work; yea, abſtain from all appearance of evil. And *learn to do well:* be zealous of good works; of works of piety, as well as works of mercy: family prayer, and crying to God in ſecret. Faſt in ſecret, and *your Father which ſeeth in ſecret, he will reward you openly. Search the Scriptures:* hear them in public, read them in private, and meditate therein. At every opportunity be a partaker of the Lord's Supper. *Do this, in remembrance of him,* and he will meet you at his own table. Let your converſation be with the children of God, and ſee that it *be in grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt.* As ye have time do good unto all men, to their ſouls

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and to their bodies. And herein *be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* It then only remains, that ye deny yourſelves and take up your croſs daily. Deny yourſelves every pleaſure which does not prepare you for taking pleaſure in God, and willingly embrace every means of drawing near to God, though it be a croſs, though it be grievous to fleſh and blood. Thus when you have redemption in the blood of Chriſt, you will *go on to perfection*; till *walking in the light as he is in the light*, you are enabled to teſtify, that *he is faithful and juſt*, not only to *forgive* your *ſins*, but *to cleanſe you from all unrighteouſneſs.*

III. 1. "But ſay ſome, what connexion is there between the former and the latter clauſe of this ſentence? Is there not rather a flat oppoſition, between the one and the other? If it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, what need is there of our working? Does not his working thus ſupercede the neceſſity of our working at all? Nay, does it not render our working impracticable, as well as unneceſſary? For if we allow that God does all, what is there left for us to do?"

2. Such is the reaſoning of fleſh and blood. And at firſt hearing it is exceeding plauſible. But it is not ſolid, as will evidently appear if we conſider the matter more deeply. We ſhall then ſee there is no oppoſition between theſe, "God works:" therefore do ye work: but on the contrary, the cloſeſt connexion, and that in two reſpects. For firſt God works; therefore you *can* work: ſecondly, God works, therefore you *muſt* work.

3. Firſt

3. First, God worketh in you; therefore you can work: otherwise it would be impossible. If he did not work, it would be impossible for you to work out your own salvation. *With man this is impossible*, saith our Lord, *for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Yea, it is impossible for any man; for any that is born of a woman, unless God work in him. Seeing all men are by nature not only sick, but *dead in trespasses and sins*, it is not possible for them to do any thing well, till God raises them from the dead. It was impossible for *Lazarus* to *come forth*, till the Lord had given him life. And it is equally impossible for us, to *come* out of our sins, yea, or to make the least motion toward it, till he who hath all power in heaven and earth, calls our dead souls into life.

4. Yet this is no excuse for those who continue in sin, and lay the blame upon their Maker, by saying, It is God only that must quicken us; for we cannot quicken our own souls. For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin *by nature*, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature: there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called *Natural Conscience*. But this is not natural: it is more properly termed *Preventing Grace*. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. Every one has sooner or later, good desires, although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root, or produce any considerable fruit. Every

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one has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world. And every one, unless he be one of the small number, whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron, feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his conscience. So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath.

Therefore, in as much as God works in you, you are now able to work out your own salvation. Since he worketh in you of his own good pleasure, without any merit of yours, both to will and to do, it is possible to fulfil all righteousness. It is possible for you, to *love God, because he hath first loved us*, and to *walk in love*, after the pattern of our great Master. We know indeed that word of his to be absolutely true. *Without me ye can do nothing.* But on the other hand we know, every believer can say, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*

6 Mean time let us remember, that God has joined these together in the experience of every believer. And therefore we must take care, not to imagine they are ever to be put asunder. We must beware of that mock humility, which teacheth us to say, in excuse for our wilful disobedience, "O, I can do nothing:" and stops there, without once naming the grace of God. Pray, think twice. Consider what you say. I hope you wrong yourself. For if it be really true, that you can do nothing, then you have no faith. And if you have not faith, you are in a wretched condition: you are not in a state of salvation. Surely it is not so. You can do something, through Christ strengthening

ſtrengthening you. Stir up the ſpark of grace which is now in you, and he will give you more grace.

7. Secondly. God worketh in you: therefore you *muſt* work: you muſt be *workers together with him*, (they are the very words of the Apoſtle) otherwiſe he will ceaſe working. The general rule on which his gracious diſpenſations invariably proceed is this, "Unto him that hath, ſhall be given: but from him that hath not," that does not improve the grace already given, "ſhall be taken away what he aſſuredly hath; (So the words ought to be rendered.) Even St. *Auguſtine*, who is generally ſuppoſed to favour the contrary doctrine, makes that juſt remark, *Qui fecit nos ſine nobis, non ſalvabit nos ſine nobis:* "He that made us without ourſelves, will not ſave us without ourſelves." He will not ſave us, unleſs we "[illegible] ourſelves from this untoward generation:" unleſs we ourſelves, "fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life:" unleſs we "agonize to enter in at the ſtraight gate, deny ourſelves, and take up our croſs daily," and labour, by every poſſible means, to "make our own calling and election ſure." *Save*

8. *Labour* then, Brethren, "not for the meat that periſheth, but for that which endureth to everlaſting life." Say with our bleſſed Lord, though in a ſomewhat different ſenſe, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." In conſideration that he ſtill worketh in you, be never "weary of well-doing." Go on, in virtue of the grace of God, preventing, accompanying and following you, in "the work of faith,

faith, in the patience of hope, and the labour of love. Be ye ſtedfaſt and immoveable; always abounding in the work of the Lord." And "the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of his ſheep [Jeſus] make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever and ever!"

SERMON

SERMON LXXXVIII.

A Call to Backsliders.

Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8.

Will the Lord abſent himſelf for ever? And will he be no more intreated?

Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And is his promiſe come utterly to an end for evermore?

1. PRESUMPTION is one grand ſnare of the devil in which many of the children of men are taken. They ſo preſume upon the Mercy of God, as utterly to forget his Juſtice. Although he has expreſsly declared, "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord," yet they flatter themſelves, that in the end, God will be better than his word. They imagine they may live and die in their ſins, and nevertheleſs "eſcape the damnation of hell."

2. But although there are many that are deſtroyed by *Preſumption*, there are ſtill more that periſh by *Deſpair*. I mean by want of hope; by thinking it impoſſible that they ſhould eſcape deſtruction. Having many times fought againſt their ſpiritual enemies, and always been overcome, they lay down their arms; they no more contend, as they have no hope of victory. Knowing by melancholy experience, that they have no power of themſelves to help themſelves, and having no expectation that God will help them, they lie down under their burden. They no longer ſtrive; for they ſuppoſe it is impoſſible they ſhould attain.

3. In this caſe, as in a thouſand others, "the heart knoweth its own bitterneſs, but a ſtranger intermeddleth not with his grief." It is not eaſy for thoſe to know it who never felt it. For "who knoweth the things of a man, but the ſpirit of a man that is in him?" Who knoweth, unleſs by his own experience, what this ſort of "wounded ſpirit" means! Of conſequence there are few that know how to ſympathize with them that are under this ſore temptation. There are few that have duly conſidered the caſe; few that are not deceived by appearances. They ſee men go on in a courſe of ſin, and take it for granted, it is out of mere preſumption: whereas in reality it is from the quite contrary principle; it is out of mere deſpair. Either they have no hope at all, and while that is the caſe they do not ſtrive at all; or they have ſome intervals of hope, and while that laſts, "ſtrive for the maſtery." But that hope ſoon fails: they then ceaſe to ſtrive, and are *taken captive* of Satan *at his will*.

4. This is frequently the caſe with thoſe that began to run well, but ſoon tired in the heavenly road:

road: with thoſe in particular, who once "ſaw the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt;" but afterwards grieved his Holy Spirit, and made ſhipwreck of the faith. Indeed many of theſe ruſh into ſin, as a horſe into the battle. They ſin with ſo high an hand, as utterly to quench the Holy Spirit of God: ſo that he gives them up to their own heart's luſts, and lets them follow their own imaginations. And thoſe who are thus given up may be quite ſtupid, without either fear, or ſorrow, or care; utterly eaſy and unconcerned, about God, or heaven, or hell; to which the god of this world contributes not a little, by blinding and hardening their hearts. But ſtill even thoſe would not be ſo careleſs, were it not for deſpair. The great reaſon why they have no ſorrow or care, is becauſe they have no hope. They verily believe, they have ſo provoked God, that "he will be no more intreated."

5. And yet we need not utterly give up even theſe. We have known ſome, even of the careleſs ones, whom God has viſited again, and reſtored to their firſt love. But we may have much more hope for thoſe backſliders who are not careleſs, who are ſtill uneaſy: thoſe who fain would eſcape out of the ſnare of the devil; but think it is impoſſible. They are fully convinced they cannot ſave themſelves, and believe God *will* not ſave them. They believe he has irrevocably "ſhut up his loving kindneſs in diſpleaſure." They fortify themſelves in believing this, by abundance of reaſons. And unleſs thoſe reaſons are clearly removed, they cannot hope for any deliverance.

It is in order to relieve thoſe hopeleſs, helpleſs ſouls, that I propoſe, with God's aſſiſtance,

First, to enquire what the chief of those reasons are, some or other of which induce so many backsliders to cast away hope, to suppose that God hath "forgotten to be gracious." And, Secondly, to give a clear and full answer to each of those reasons.

I. I am, first, to enquire, What the chief of those reasons are, which induce so many backsliders to think that God "hath forgotten to be gracious." I do not say *all* the reasons: for innumerable are those which either their own evil hearts, or that old serpent will suggest: but the chief of them; those that are most plausible, and therefore most common.

1. The first argument which induces many backsliders to believe that "the Lord will be no more intreated," is drawn from the very reason of the thing: "If, say they, a man rebel against an earthly prince, many times he dies for the first offence, he pays his life for the first transgression. Yet possibly if the crime be extenuated by some favourable circumstances, or if strong intercession be made for him, his life may be given him. But if after a full and free pardon, he were guilty of rebelling a second time, who would dare to intercede for him? He must expect no farther mercy. Now if one rebelling against an earthly king after he has been freely pardoned once, cannot with any colour of reason hope to be forgiven a second time: what must be the case of him, that after having been freely pardoned for rebelling against the great King of heaven and earth, rebels against him again? What can be expected, but that "vengeance will come upon him to the uttermost?"

II. 1. This

II. 1. This argument drawn from reaſon, they enforce by ſeveral paſſages of Scripture. One of the ſtrongeſt of theſe, is that which occurs in the firſt epiſtle of St. John, v. 16. "If any man ſee his brother ſin a ſin which is not unto death, he ſhall aſk, and God ſhall give him life for them that ſin not unto death. There is a ſin unto death. I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it."

Hence they argue, "*Certainly* I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it," is equivalent with, "I ſay he ſhall not pray for it." So the Apoſtle ſuppoſes him that has committed this ſin, to be in a deſperate ſtate indeed! So deſperate, that we may not even pray for his forgiveneſs; we may not aſk life for him; and what may we more reaſonably ſuppoſe to be a ſin unto death, than a wilful rebellion after a full and free pardon?"

2. Conſider Secondly, ſay they, thoſe terrible paſſages in the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, one of which occurs in the ſixth chapter, the other in the tenth. To begin with the latter: "If we ſin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no other ſacrifice for ſin; but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries. He that deſpiſed Moſes' Law died without mercy: of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and done deſpite to the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance is mine: I will recompence, ſaith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" v. 26—31. Now is it not here expreſsly declared by the Holy

Ghoſt, that our caſe is deſperate? Is it not declared, that "if after we have received the knowledge of the truth," after we have experimentally known it, "we ſin wilfully," which we have undoubtedly done, and that over and over, "there remaineth no other ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries?"

3. And is not that paſſage in the ſixth chapter exactly parallel with this? "It is impoſſible for thoſe that were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt——If they fall away, (*literally*, and have fallen away) to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame." v. 4.—6.

4. It is true, ſome are of opinion, that thoſe words, *it is impoſſible*, are not to be taken literally as denoting abſolute impoſſibility, but a very great difficulty. But it does not appear that we have any ſufficient reaſon to depart from the literal meaning, as it neither implies any abſurdity, nor contradicts any other ſcriptures. Does not this then, they ſay, cut off all hope, ſeeing we have undoubtedly "taſted of that heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt?" How is it poſſible to "renew us again to repentance," to an entire change both of heart and life? Seeing we *have crucified* to ourſelves "the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame?"

5. A yet more dreadful paſſage, if poſſible, than this, is that in the twelfth chapter of St. *Matthew*. "All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall not be forgiven unto men.

men. And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him. But whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come," v. 31, 32. Exactly parallel to theſe are thoſe words of our Lord, which are recited by St. *Mark*: "Verily I ſay unto you, all ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they blaſpheme. But he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven, but is in danger of eternal damnation." ch. iii. 28, 29.

6. It has been the judgment of ſome, that all theſe paſſages point at one and the ſame ſin; that not only the words of our Lord, but thoſe of St. *John*, concerning the *ſin unto death*, and thoſe of St. *Paul*, concerning "crucifying to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, treading under foot the Son of God, and doing deſpite to the Spirit of grace," all refer to the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, the only ſin that ſhall never be forgiven. Whether they do or no, it muſt be allowed that this blaſphemy is abſolutely unpardonable: and that conſequently, for thoſe who have been guilty of this, God "will be no more intreated."

7. To confirm thoſe arguments drawn from reaſon and ſcripture, they appeal to matter of fact. They aſk, "Is it not a fact, that thoſe who fall away from juſtifying grace, who *make ſhipwreck of the faith*, that faith whereof cometh preſent ſalvation, periſh without mercy? How much leſs can any of thoſe eſcape, who fall away from ſanctifying grace? Who make ſhipwreck of that faith, whereby they are cleanſed from all pollution

pollution of the flesh and spirit? Has there ever been an instance of one or the other of these being "renewed again to repentance?" If there be any instances of that, one would be inclined to believe that thought of our poet not to be extravagant,

"Even Judas struggles his despair to quell,
Hope almost blossoms in the shades of hell."

III. These are the principal arguments, drawn from reason, from scripture, and from fact, whereby backsliders are wont to justify themselves, in casting away hope: in supposing that God hath utterly "shut up his loving kindness in displeasure." I have proposed them in their full strength, that we may form the better judgment concerning them, and try whether each of them may not receive a clear, full, satisfactory answer.

1. I begin with that argument which is taken from the nature of the thing. "If a man rebel against an earthly prince, he may possibly be forgiven the first time. But if after a full and free pardon, he should rebel again, there is no hope of obtaining a second pardon: he must expect to die without mercy. Now if he that rebels again against an earthly king, can look for no second pardon: how can he look for mercy, who rebels a second time against the great King of heaven and earth?"

2. I answer; this argument drawn from the analogy between earthly and heavenly things, is plausible, but it is not solid: and that for this plain reason, analogy has no place here: there can be no analogy or proportion between the mercy of any of the children of men, and that of

of the moſt high God. "Unto whom will ye liken me, ſaith the Lord?" Unto whom either in heaven or earth? Who, "what is he among the gods, that ſhall be compared unto the Lord? I have ſaid, Ye are Gods," ſaith the Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking to ſupreme magiſtrates. Such is your dignity and power, compared to that of common men. But what are they to the God of heaven? As a bubble upon the wave. What is their power in compariſon of his power? What is their mercy compared to his mercy? Hence that comfortable word, "I am God and not man, therefore the houſe of Iſrael is not conſumed." Becauſe he is God and not man, "therefore his compaſſions fail not." None then can infer, that becauſe an earthly king will not pardon one that rebels againſt him a ſecond time, therefore the King of heaven will not: yea, he will: not until ſeven times only, or until ſeventy times ſeven. Nay, were your rebellions multiplied as the ſtars of heaven, were they more in number than the hairs of your head: yet "return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon."

3. But does not St. *John* cut us off from this hope, by what he ſays of the "ſin unto death?" Is not, "I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it," equivalent with, "I ſay he ſhall not pray for it?" And does not this imply that God has determined, not to hear that prayer? That he will not give life to ſuch a ſinner, no, not through the prayer of a righteous man?

4. I anſwer, "I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it," certainly means, "He ſhall not pray for it." And it doubtleſs implies, that God will not give life unto them that have ſinned this ſin: that

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their ſentence is paſſed, and God has determined, it ſhall not be revoked. It cannot be altered even by that *effectual fervent prayer*, which in other caſes *availeth much*.

IV. But I aſk, firſt, what is the *ſin unto death?* And ſecondly, What is the *death* which is annexed to it.

And firſt, What is the *ſin unto death?* It is now many years ſince being among a people the moſt experienced in the things of God, of any I had ever ſeen, I aſked ſome of them, What do you underſtand by the *ſin unto death*, mentioned in the firſt epiſtle of St. *John?* They anſwered, "*If any one is ſick among us, he ſends for the Elders of the Church:* and they pray over him, and the *prayer of faith ſaves the ſick, and the Lord raiſes him up. And if he hath committed ſins*, which God was puniſhing by that ſickneſs, *they are forgiven him.* But ſometimes none of us can pray that God would *raiſe him up*. And we are conſtrained to tell him, "We are afraid, that you have ſinned *a ſin unto death;* a ſin that God has determined to puniſh with death, we cannot pray for your recovery." And we have never yet known an inſtance of ſuch a perſon recovering.

2. I ſee no abſurdity at all in this interpretation of the word. It ſeems to be one meaning (at leaſt) of the expreſſion, *a ſin unto death;* a ſin which God was determined to puniſh by the death of the ſinner. If therefore you have ſinned a ſin of this kind, and your ſin has overtaken you; if God is chaſtiſing you by ſome ſevere diſeaſe, it will not avail to pray for your life; you are irrevocably ſentenced to die. But, obſerve!

This

This has no reference to eternal death. It does by no means imply that you are condemned to die the second death. No: it rather implies the contrary; the body is deſtroyed, that the ſoul may eſcape deſtruction. I have myſelf, during a courſe of many years, ſeen numerous inſtances of this. I have known many ſinners, (chiefly notorious backſliders from high degrees of holineſs; and ſuch as had given great occaſion to the enemies of religion to blaſpheme) whom God has cut ſhort in the midſt of their journey, yea, before they had lived out half their days. Theſe I apprehend, had ſinned *a ſin unto death*; in conſequence of which they were cut off, ſometimes more ſwiftly, ſometimes more ſlowly, by an unexpected ſtroke. But in moſt of theſe caſes it has been obſerved, that *mercy rejoiced over judgment*. And the perſons themſelves were fully convinced of the goodneſs as well as juſtice of God. They acknowledged, that he deſtroyed the body, in order to ſave the ſoul. Before they went hence, he healed their backſliding. So they died, that they might live for ever.

3. A very remarkable inſtance of this, occurred many years ago. A young collier in *Kingſwood*, near *Briſtol*, was an eminent ſinner, and afterwards an eminent ſaint. But by little and little he renewed his acquaintance with his old companions, who by degrees wrought upon him, till he dropped all his religion, and was two-fold more a child of hell than before. One day he was working in the pit with a ſerious young man, who ſuddenly ſtopped and cried out, "O Tommy, what a man was you once! How did your words and example provoke many to love and to good works! And what are you now? What would become

become of you, if you were to die as you are?" "Nay, God forbid, said *Thomas*: for then I should fall into hell headlong! O let us cry to God!" They did so for a considerable time, first the one, and then the other. They called upon God with strong cries and tears, wrestling with him in mighty prayer. After some time *Thomas* broke out, "Now I know, God hath healed my backsliding. I know again that my Redeemer liveth, and that he hath washed me from my sins with his own blood. I am willing to go to him." Instantly part of the pit calved in, and crushed him to death in a moment. Whoever thou art that hast sinned *a sin unto death*, lay this to heart! It may be, God will require thy soul of thee, in an hour when thou lookest not for it! But if he doth, there is mercy in the midst of judgment: thou shalt not die eternally.

4. "But what say you to that other scripture, namely the tenth of the *Hebrews?* Does that leave any hope to notorious backsliders, that they shall not die eternally? That they can ever recover the favour of God, or escape the damnation of hell?" "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no other sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' Law, died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

5. And

5. And is not the ſame thing, namely, the deſperate, irrecoverable ſtate of wilful backſliders, fully confirmed by that parallel paſſage, in the ſixth chapter? "It is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and partakers of the Holy Ghoſt—and have fallen away ("ſo it is in the original") to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame."

6. Theſe paſſages ſeem to me parallel to each other, and deſerve our deepeſt conſideration. And in order to underſtand them, it will be neceſſary to know, 1. Who are the perſons here ſpoken of, and 2. What is the ſin they had committed, which made their caſe nearly, if not quite deſperate.

As to the firſt, it will be clear to all who impartially conſider and compare both theſe paſſages, that the perſons ſpoken of herein, are thoſe and thoſe only that have been juſtified, that the eyes of their underſtanding were opened and *enlightened*, to ſee the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe only *have taſted of the heavenly gift*, remiſſion of ſins, eminently ſo called. Theſe *were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*, both of the witneſs and the fruit of the Spirit. This character cannot with any propriety be applied to any but thoſe that have been juſtified.

And they had been *ſanctified* too, at leaſt in the firſt degree, as far as all are who receive remiſſion of ſins. So the ſecond paſſage expreſsly, "Who hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was *ſanctified*, an unholy thing"

7. Hence it follows, that this ſcripture concerns thoſe alone, who have been *juſtified*, and, at leaſt in part, *ſanctified*. Therefore all of you, who never were thus *enlightened* with the light of the glory of God; all who never did *taſte of the heavenly gift*, who never received remiſſion of ſins: all who never *were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*, of the witneſs and fruit of the Spirit: in a word, all you who never were *ſanctified* by the blood of the everlaſting covenant: you are not concerned here. Whatever other paſſages of ſcripture may condemn you, it is certain you are not condemned either by the ſixth or the tenth of the *Hebrews*. For both thoſe paſſages ſpeak wholly and ſolely of apoſtates from the faith which you never had. Therefore it was not poſſible that you ſhould loſe it, for you could not loſe what you had not. Therefore whatever judgments are denounced in theſe ſcriptures, they are not denounced againſt *you*. You are not the perſons here deſcribed, againſt whom only they are denounced.

8. Enquire we next, What was the ſin which the perſons here deſcribed were guilty of? In order to underſtand this, we ſhould remember, that whenever the Jews prevailed on a Chriſtian to apoſtatize, they required him to declare in expreſs terms, and that in the public aſſembly, That Jeſus of Nazareth was a deceiver of the people; and that he had ſuffered no more puniſhment, than his crimes juſtly deſerved. That is the ſin, which St. *Paul* in the firſt paſſage terms emphatically "falling away; crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and putting him to an open ſhame." This is that which he terms in the ſecond, "counting the blood of the covenant an unholy

unholy thing; treading under foot the Son of God, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace." Now which of you has thus *fallen away?* Which of you has thus "crucified the Son of God afresh?" Not one: nor has one of you thus "put him to an open shame." If you had thus formally renounced that only *sacrifice for sin;* there had *no other sacrifice remained;* so that you must have perished without mercy. But this is not your case. Not one of you has thus renounced that sacrifice, by which the Son of God made a full and perfect satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Bad as you are, you shudder at the thought: therefore that *sacrifice* still remains for you. Come then, cast away your needless fears! "Come boldly to the throne of grace!" The way is still open, You shall again "find mercy and grace to help in time of need."

V. 1. "But do not the well-known words of our Lord himself, cut us off from all hope of mercy?" Does he not say, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men—And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall never be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." Therefore it is plain, if we have been guilty of this sin, there is no room for mercy. And is not the same thing repeated by St. *Mark*, almost in the same words? "Verily I say unto you," (a solemn preface! always denoting the great importance of that which follows:) "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that

blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never forgiveneſs, but is under the ſentence of eternal damnation."

2. How immenſe is the number of every nation, throughout the Chriſtian world, of thoſe who have been more or leſs diſtreſſed, on account of this ſcripture? What multitudes in this kingdom have been perplexed above meaſure upon this very account? Nay, there are few that are truly convinced of ſin, and ſeriouſly endeavour to ſave their ſouls, who have not felt ſome uneaſineſs, for fear they had committed, or ſhould commit this unpardonable ſin. What has frequently increaſed their uneaſineſs was, that they could hardly find any to comfort them. For their acquaintances, even the moſt religious of them, underſtood no more of the matter than themſelves. And they could not find any writer, who had publiſhed any thing ſatisfactory upon the ſubject. Indeed in the ſeven ſermons of Mr. *Ruſſel*, which are common among us, there is one expreſsly written upon it. But it will give little ſatisfaction to a troubled ſpirit. He talks "about it, and about it," but makes nothing out: he takes much pains, but miſſes the mark at laſt.

3. But was there ever in the world a more deplorable proof of the littleneſs of human underſtanding, even in thoſe that have honeſt hearts, and are deſirous of knowing the truth! How is it poſſible that any one who reads his Bible, can one hour remain in doubt concerning it, when our Lord himſelf, in the very paſſage cited above, has ſo clearly told us, what that blaſphemy is? "He that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never forgiveneſs; because they ſaid, he hath an unclean ſpirit, ver. 29, 30." This then,

then, and this alone, (if we allow our Lord to underſtand his own meaning) is the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt. "The ſaying, he had an unclean ſpirit;" the affirming that Chriſt wrought his miracles by the power of an evil ſpirit; or more particularly, that "he caſt out devils, by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Now have *you* been guilty of this? Have *you* affirmed, that he caſt out devils by the prince of devils? No more than you have cut your neighbour's throat, and ſet his houſe on fire. How marvellouſly then have you been afraid, where no fear is? Diſmiſs that vain terror; let your fear be more rational for the time to come. Be afraid of giving way to pride, be afraid of yielding to anger, be afraid of loving the world, or the things of the world, be afraid of fooliſh and hurtful deſires. But never more be afraid of committing the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt! you are in no more danger of doing this, than of pulling the ſun out of the firmament.

4. Ye have then no reaſon from ſcripture, for imagining that "the Lord hath forgotten to be gracious." The arguments drawn from thence you ſee, are of no weight, are utterly inconcluſive. Is there any more weight in that which has been drawn from experience or matter of fact?

5. This is a point which may exactly be determined; and that with the utmoſt certainty. If it be aſked, "Do any real apoſtates find mercy from God? Do any that "have made ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience," recover what they have loſt? Do you know, have you ſeen any inſtance of perſons, who found redemption in the blood of Jeſus, and afterwards fell

away, and yet were reſtored? "Renewed again to repentance?" Yea, verily; and not one; or an hundred only; but I am perſuaded, ſeveral thouſands. In every place where the arm of the Lord has been revealed, and many ſinners converted to God, there are ſeveral found, who "turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." For a great part of theſe, "it had been better never to have known the way of righteouſneſs." It only increaſes their damnation, ſeeing they die in their ſins. But others there are, who "look unto him they have pierced, and mourn," refuſing to be comforted. And ſooner, or later, he ſurely lifts up the light of his countenance upon them. He ſtrengthens the hands that hung down, and confirms the feeble knees. He teaches them again to ſay, "My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." Innumerable are the inſtances of this kind, of thoſe who had fallen, but now ſtand upright. Indeed it is ſo far from being an uncommon thing, for a believer to fall and be reſtored, that it is rather uncommon to find, any believers who are not conſcious, of having been backſliders from God, in a higher or lower degree, and perhaps more than once before they were eſtabliſhed in faith.

6. "But have any that had fallen from juſtifying grace, been reſtored to the bleſſings they had loſt?" This alſo is a point of experience: and we have had the opportunity of repeating our obſervations, during a conſiderable courſe of years, and from the one end of the kingdom to the other.

7. And,

7. And, first, we have known a large number of persons, of every age and sex, from early childhood to extreme old age, who have given all the proofs which the nature of the thing admits, that they were "sanctified throughout, cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit:" that they "loved the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength:" that they continually *presented* their souls and bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God:" in consequence of which they "rejoiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, and in every thing gave thanks." And this, and no other is what we believe to be true, scriptural sanctification.

8. Secondly, It is a common thing for those who are thus sanctified, to believe they cannot fall: to suppose themselves "pillars in the temple of God, that shall go out no more." Nevertheless we have seen some of the strongest of them, after a time, moved from their steadfastness. Sometimes suddenly, but oftener by slow degrees, they have yielded to temptation; and pride, or anger, or foolish desires have again sprung up in their hearts. Nay, sometimes they have utterly lost the life of God, and sin hath regained dominion over them.

9. Yet, thirdly, several of these, after being thoroughly sensible of their fall, and deeply ashamed before God, have been again filled with his love, and not only *perfected* therein, but *stablished*, *strengthened*, and *settled*. They have received the blessing they had before, with abundant increase. Nay, it is remarkable, that many who had fallen either from justifying, or from sanctifying

ſanctifying grace, and ſo deeply fallen, that they could hardly be ranked among the ſervants of God, have been reſtored, (but ſeldom till they had been ſhaken as it were, over the mouth of hell) and that very frequently in an inſtant, to all that they had loſt. They have at once recovered both a conſciouſneſs of his favour and the experience of the pure love of God. In one moment they received anew, both remiſſion of ſins, and a lot among them that were ſanctified.

10. But let not any man infer from this long-ſuffering of God, that he hath given any one a licenſe to ſin. Neither let any dare to continue in ſin, becauſe of theſe extraordinary inſtances of divine mercy. This is the moſt deſperate preſumption, and leads to utter, irrecoverable deſtruction. In all my experience, I have not known one, who fortified himſelf in ſin, by a preſumption that God would ſave him at the laſt, that was not miſerably diſappointed, and ſuffered to die in his ſins. To turn the grace of God into an encouragement to ſin is the ſure way to the nethermoſt hell.

11. It is not for theſe deſperate children of perdition, that the preceding conſiderations are deſigned; but for thoſe who feel "the remembrance of their ſins is grievous unto them, the burden of them is intolerable." We ſet before theſe an open door of hope: let them go in and give thanks unto the Lord. Let them know, that "the Lord is gracious and merciful: long-ſuffering and of great goodneſs. Look how high the heavens are from the earth! So far will he ſet their ſins from them. He will not always be chiding; neither keepeth he his anger for

for ever." Only ſettle it in your heart, "I will give all for all," and the offering ſhall be accepted. Give him all your heart! Let all that is within you continually cry out, "Thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee. This God is my God for ever and ever! He ſhall be my guide even unto death."

SERMON

SERMON LXXXIX.

THE DANGER OF RICHES.

1 TIMOTHY, vi. 9.

They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1. HOW innumerable are the ill consequences which have followed from men's not knowing, or not considering this great truth! And how few are there even in the christian world, that either know or duly consider it! Yea, how small is the number of those even among real Christians, who understand and lay it to heart! Most of these too pass it very lightly over, scarce remembering there is such a text in the Bible. And many put such a construction upon it, as makes of it no manner of effect.

effect. "They that will be rich," say they, that is, will be rich at all events, who will be rich right or wrong; that are resolved to carry their point, to compass this end, whatever means they use to attain it; "they fall into temptation," and into all the evils enumerated by the Apostle. But truly if this were all the meaning of the text, it might as well have been out of the Bible.

2. This is so far from being the whole meaning of the text, That it is no part of its meaning. The Apostle does not here speak of gaining riches unjustly, but of quite another thing: his words are to be taken in their plain obvious sense, without any restriction or qualification whatsoever. St. *Paul* does not say, "They that will be rich *by evil means*, by theft, robbery, oppression or extortion, they that will be rich by fraud or dishonest art, but simply, "they that will be rich:" these, allowing, supposing the means they use to be ever so innocent, "fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

3. But who believes that? Who receives it as the truth of God? Who is deeply convinced of it? Who preaches this? Great is the company of Preachers at this day, regular and irregular. But who of them all, openly and explicitly, preaches this strange doctrine? It is the keen observation of a great man, "The Pulpit is the Preachers strong-hold." But who even in his strong-hold, has the courage to declare so unfashionable a truth? I do not remember, that in threescore years, I have heard one sermon preached upon this subject. And what author within

within the ſame term, has declared it from the preſs? At leaſt in the *Engliſh* tongue? I do not know one. I have ſeen two or three who juſt touched upon it; but none that treats of it profeſſedly. I have myſelf frequently touched upon it in preaching, and thrice in what I have publiſhed to the world: once in explaining our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and once in the diſcourſe on the *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*. But I have never yet either publiſhed or preached any ſermon expreſsly upon the ſubject. It is high time I ſhould: that I ſhould at length ſpeak as ſtrongly and explicitly as I can, in order to leave a full and clear teſtimony behind me, whenever it pleaſes God to call me hence.

4. O that God would give me to ſpeak *right* and *forcible* words! And you to receive them in honeſt and humble hearts! Let it not be ſaid, "They ſit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words: but they will not do them. Thou art unto them as one that hath a pleaſant voice, and can play well on an inſtrument: for they hear thy words: but do them not!" O that ye may "not be forgetful hearers, but doers of the word, that ye may be bleſſed in your deed!" In this hope I ſhall endeavour,

Firſt, to explain the Apoſtle's words. And,

Secondly, to apply them.

But O! *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* Who is able to ſtem the general torrent? To combat all the prejudices, not only of the vulgar, but of the learned and the religious world? Yet nothing is too hard for God! Still his grace is ſufficient for us. In his name then, and by his ſtrength I will endeavour,

I. To

I. To explain the words of the Apoſtle.

1. And firſt, let us conſider, What it is to *be rich?* What does the Apoſtle mean by this expreſſion?

The preceding verſes fix the meaning of that. "Having food and raiment" (literally *coverings*; for the words includes *lodging* as well as *clothes*) "let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich," that is, who will have more than theſe, more than *food* and *coverings*.—It plainly follows, whatever is more than theſe, is in the ſenſe of the Apoſtle *riches*, whatever is above the plain neceſſaries, or (at moſt) conveniences of life. Whoever has ſufficient food to eat, and raiment to put on, with a place where to lay his head, and ſomething over is *rich*.

2. Let us conſider, ſecondly, what is implied in that expreſſion, "They that will be rich." And does not imply, firſt, *They* that deſire *to be rich*, to have more than *food* and *coverings*: they that ſeriouſly and deliberately deſire more than food to eat and raiment to put on, and a place where to lay their head, more than the plain neceſſaries and conveniences of life? All, at leaſt who allow themſelves in this deſire, who ſee no harm in it, "deſire to be rich."

3. And ſo do, ſecondly, all thoſe that calmly, deliberately, and of ſet purpoſe *endeavour* after more than "food and coverings:" that aim at and endeavour after, not only ſo much worldly ſubſtance, as will procure them the neceſſaries and conveniences of life, but more than this, whether to lay it up or lay it out in ſuperfluities. All theſe undeniably prove their "deſire to be rich," by their endeavours after it.

4. Muſt we not, thirdly, rank among thoſe "that deſire to be rich," all that in fact, "lay up treaſures on earth:" a thing as expreſsly and clearly forbidden by our Lord, as either adultery or murder. It is allowed, 1 That we are to provide neceſſaries and conveniences for thoſe of our own houſehold; 2. That men in buſineſs are to lay up as much as is neceſſary for the carrying on of that buſineſs. 3. That we are to leave our children what will ſupply them with neceſſaries and conveniences, after we have left the world; and 4. That we are to provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men, ſo as to *owe no man any thing*. But to lay up any more, when this is done, is what our Lord has flatly forbidden. When it is calmly and deliberately done, it is a clear proof of our deſiring to be rich. And thus to lay up money is no more conſiſtent with good conſcience, than to throw it into the ſea.

5. We muſt rank among them, All who *poſſeſs* more of this world's goods, than they uſe according to the will of the donor; I ſhould rather ſay, of the proprietor, for he only *lends* them to us as ſtewards; reſerving the property of them to himſelf. And indeed he cannot poſſibly do otherwiſe, ſeeing they are the work of his hands; he is and muſt be, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth. This his unalienable right: a right he cannot diveſt himſelf of. And together with that portion of his goods, which he hath lodged in our hands, he has delivered to us a writing, ſpecifying the purpoſes for which he has intruſted us with them. If therefore we keep more of them in our hands, than is neceſſary for the preceding purpoſes, we certainly fall under the charge of *deſiring to be rich*: over and above we

are

are guilty of burying our Lord's talent in the earth: and on that account are liable to be pronounced *wicked*, because *unprofitable servants*.

6. Under this imputation of *desiring to be rich*, fall, 5. All *lovers of money*. The word properly means those that *delight in money*, those that take pleasure in it, those that seek their happiness therein, that brood over their gold and silver, bills or bonds. Such was the man described by the fine Roman painter, who broke out in that natural soliloquy,

——*Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo*
Ipse domi quoties nummos contemplor in arcâ.

If there are any vices which are not natural to man, I should imagine, this is one: as money of itself does not seem to gratify any natural desire or appetite of the human mind: and as during an observation of sixty years, I do not remember one instance, of a man given up to the love of money, till he had neglected to employ this precious talent, according to the will of his master. After this, sin was punished by sin, and this evil spirit was permitted to enter into him.

7. But beside this gross sort of covetousness, *the love of money*, there is a more refined species of covetousness, mentioned by the great Apostle, πλεονεξια: which literally means, *a desire of having more*, more than we have already. And those also come under the denomination of *they that will be rich*. It is true that this desire, under proper restrictions, is innocent: nay commendable. But when it exceeds the bounds, (and

how difficult is it not to exceed them?) then it comes under the preſent cenſure.

8. But who is able to receive theſe hard ſayings? Who can believe that they are the great truths of God? Not many wiſe; not many noble; not many famed for learning: none indeed who are not taught of God: and who are they, whom God teaches? Let our Lord anſwer, "If any man be willing to do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Thoſe who are otherwiſe minded, will be ſo far from receiving it, that they will not be able to underſtand it. Two as ſenſible men as moſt in England, ſat down together ſome time ſince, to read over and conſider that plain diſcourſe, on "Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth." After much deep conſideration, one of them broke out, "Poſitively, I cannot underſtand it. Pray, do *you* underſtand it, Mr. *L.*?" Mr. *L.* honeſtly replied, "Indeed, not I. I cannot conceive what Mr. *W.* means. I can make nothing at all of it." So utterly blind is our natural underſtanding, touching the truth of God!

9. Having explained the former part of the text, "They that will be rich," and pointed out in the cleareſt manner I could, the perſons ſpoken of: I will now endeavour, God being my helper, to explain what is ſpoken of them, "They fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful deſires which drown men in deſtruction and perdition."

"They fall into temptation." This ſeems to mean more than ſimply, "they are tempted." They "enter into the temptation:" they fall plump down into it. The waves of it compaſs them about, and cover them all over. Of thoſe who

who thus enter into temptation, very few escape out of it. And the few that do, are sorely scorched by it, though not utterly consumed. If they escape at all, it is with the skin of their teeth, and with deep wounds that are not easily healed.

10. They fall, secondly, *into a snare*, the snare of the devil, which he hath purposely set in their way. I believe the Greek word properly means a gin, a steel-trap, which shews no appearance of danger. But as soon as any creature touches the spring it suddenly closes, and either crushes its bones in pieces, or consigns it to inevitable ruin.

11. They fall, thirdly, "into many foolish and hurtful desires:" ἀνοήτους: silly, senseless, fantastic: as contrary to reason, to sound understanding, as they are to religion: *hurtful*, both to body and soul, tending to weaken, yea, destroy every gracious and heavenly temper; destructive of that faith which is of the operation of God; of that hope which is full of immortality; of love to God and to our neighbour, and of every good word and work,

12. But what desires are these? This is a most important question, and deserves the deepest consideration.

In general, they may all be summed up in one, The desiring happiness out of God. This includes, directly or remotely, every foolish and hurtful desire. St. *Paul* expresses it by "loving the creature more than the Creator:" and by being "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." In particular, they are (to use the exact and beautiful enumeration of St. *John*) "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride

of life:" all of which, "the desire of riches" naturally tends both to beget and to increase.

13. "The desire of the flesh" is generally understood in far too narrow a meaning. It does not, as is commonly supposed, refer to one of the senses only, but takes in all the pleasures of sense, the gratification of any of the outward senses. It has reference to the *taste* in particular. How many thousands do we find at this day, in whom the ruling principle is, the desire to enlarge the pleasure of *tasting?* Perhaps they do not gratify this desire in a gross manner, so as to incur the imputation of intemperance: much less, so as to violate health or impair their understanding by gluttony or drunkenness. But they live in a genteel, regular sensuality, in an elegant epicurism, which does not hurt the body, but only destroys the soul, keeping it at a distance from all true religion.

14. Experience shews, that the imagination is gratified chiefly by means of the eye. Therefore "the desire of the eyes," in its natural sense is, the desiring and seeking happiness in gratifying the imagination. Now the imagination is gratified either by grandeur, by beauty, or by novelty: chiefly by the last: for neither grand nor beautiful objects please, any longer than they are new.

15 Seeking happiness in *learning*, of whatever kind, falls under "the desire of the eyes," whether it be in history, languages, poetry, or any branch of natural or experimental philosophy: yea, we must include the several kinds of learning, such as Geometry, Algebra and Metaphysics. For if our supreme delight be in any of these,

these, we are herein gratifying "the desire of the eyes."

16. "The pride of life" (whatever else that very uncommon expression ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου may mean) seems to imply chiefly, the *desire of honour*, of the esteem, admiration and applause of men: as nothing more directly tends both to beget and cherish pride, than the honour that cometh of men. And as *riches* attract much admiration, and occasion much applause, they proportionably minister food for pride, and so may also be referred to this head.

17. "Desire of ease," is another of these foolish and hurtful desires: desire of avoiding every cross, every degree of trouble, danger, difficulty; a desire of slumbering out life, and going to heaven, (as the vulgar say) upon a feather-bed. Every one may observe, how riches first beget, and then confirm and increase this desire, making men more and more soft and delicate, more unwilling and indeed more unable, to *take up* their "cross daily, *to* endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and to take the kingdom of heaven by violence."

18. Riches either desired or possessed, naturally lead to some or other of these foolish and hurtful desires; and by affording the means of gratifying them all, naturally tend to increase them. And there is a near connexion between unholy desires, and every other unholy passion and temper. We easily pass from these to pride, anger, bitterness, envy, malice, revengefulness; to an headstrong, unadviseable, unreprovable spirit: indeed to every temper that is earthly, sensual, or devilish. All these the desire or possession

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of riches naturally tends to create, ſtrengthen and increaſe.

19. And by ſo doing, in the ſame proportion as they prevail, they *pierce men through with many ſorrows*: ſorrows from remorſe, from a guilty conſcience: ſorrows flowing from all the evil tempers which they inſpire or increaſe: ſorrows inſeparable from thoſe deſires themſelves, as every unholy deſire is an uneaſy deſire; and ſorrows from the contrariety of thoſe deſires to each other, whence it is impoſſible to gratify them all. And in the end *they drown* the body in pain, diſeaſe, *deſtruction*, and the ſoul in everlaſting *perdition*.

II. 2. I am in the ſecond place, to apply what has been ſaid. And this is the principle point. For what avails the cleareſt knowledge, even of the moſt excellent things, even of the things of God, if it go no farther than ſpeculation, if it be not reduced to practice? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear! And what he hears, let him inſtantly put in practice. O that God would give me the thing which I long for! That, before I go hence and am no more ſeen, I may ſee a people wholly wholly to God, crucified to the Lord, and the world crucified to them! A people truly given up to God, in body, ſoul, and ſubſtance! How chearfully ſhould I then ſay, "Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace!"

2. I aſk then, in the name of God, who of "you deſire to be rich?" Which of *you* (aſk your own hearts in the ſight of God) ſeriouſly and deliberately deſire, (and perhaps applaud yourſelves for ſo doing, as no ſmall inſtance of your *prudence*) to have more than food to eat, and raiment

raiment to put on, and a house to cover you? Who of you desires to have more than the plain necessaries and conveniences of life? Stop! Consider! What are you doing? Evil is before you! Will you rush upon the point of a sword? By the grace of God turn and live!

3. By the same authority I ask, who of you are *endeavouring* to be rich? To procure for yourselves more than the plain necessaries and conveniences of life? Lay, each of you, your hand to your heart, and seriously enquire, am I of that number? Am I labouring, not only for what I want, but for more than I want? May the Spirit of God say to every one, whom it concerns, "Thou art the man!"

4. I ask, thirdly, who of you are in fact, "laying up for yourselves treasures upon earth?" Increasing in goods? Adding, as fast as you can, house to house, and field to field? As long as *thou* thus "dost well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." They will call thee a *wise*, a *prudent* man! A man that *minds the main chance*. Such is, and always has been the wisdom of the world! *But God saith unto* thee, "*Thou fool!* Art thou not "treasuring up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?"

5. Perhaps you will ask, But do not you yourself advise, "To gain all we can, and to save all we can? And is it possible to do this, without both *desiring* and *endeavouring to be rich?* Nay, suppose our endeavours are successful, without actually *laying up treasures upon earth?*"

I answer, it is possible. You may gain all you can, without hurting either your soul or body: you may save all you can, by carefully avoiding every

every needleſs expence; and yet never *lay up treaſures on earth*, nor either deſire or endeavour ſo to do.

6. Permit me to ſpeak as freely of myſelf, as I would of another man. I *gain all I can*, (namely by writing) without hurting either my ſoul or body. I *give all I can*, not willingly waſting any thing, not a ſheet of paper, not a cup of water. I do not lay out any thing, not a ſhilling, unleſs as a ſacrifice to God. Yet by *gaining all I can*, I am effectually ſecured from *laying up treaſures upon earth*. Yea, and I am ſecured from either deſiring or endeavouring it, as long as *I give all I can*. And that I do this, I call all that know me, both friends and foes, to teſtify.

7. But ſome may ſay, "Whether you endeavour it or no, you are undeniably *rich*. You have more than the neceſſaries of life." I have. But the Apoſtle does not fix the charge, barely on *poſſeſſing* any quantity of goods, but on poſſeſſing more than we employ according to the will of the Donor.

Two and forty years ago, having a deſire to furniſh poor people, with cheaper, ſhorter, and plainer books than any I had ſeen, I wrote many ſmall tracts, generally a penny a piece; and afterwards ſeveral larger. Some of theſe had ſuch a ſale as I never thought of; and by this means I unawares became rich. But I never deſired or endeavoured after it. And now that it is come upon me unawares, I lay up no treaſures upon earth: I lay up nothing at all. My deſire, and endeavour in this reſpect is, to "wind my bottom round the year." I cannot help leaving my books behind me whenever God calls me hence. But

But in every other reſpect, my own hands will be my Executors.

8. Herein, my brethren, let you that are rich, be even as I am. Do you that poſſeſs more than food and raiment aſk, "What ſhall we do? Shall we throw into the ſea, what God hath given us?" God forbid that you ſhould! It is an excellent talent: it may be employed much to the glory of God. Your way lies plain before your face; if you have courage, walk in it. Having *gained* (in a right ſenſe) *all you can*, and *ſaved all you can*: in ſpite of nature, and cuſtom, and worldly prudence, *give all you can*. I do not ſay, "Be a good Jew," giving a tenth of all you poſſeſs. I do not ſay, "Be a good Phariſee," giving a fifth of all your ſubſtance. I dare not adviſe you, to give half of what you have; no, nor three quarters, but all! Lift up your hearts, and you will ſee clearly, in what ſenſe this is to be done. "If you deſire to be *a faithful and a wiſe Steward*, out of that portion of your Lord's goods, which he has for the preſent lodged in your hands, but with the right of reſumption whenever it pleaſeth him, 1. Provide things needful for yourſelf; food to eat, raiment to put on; whatever nature moderately requires, for preſerving you both in health and ſtrength: 2. Provide theſe for your wife, your children, your ſervants, or any others who pertain to your houſehold. If, when this is done, there is an overplus left, then do good to "to them that are of the houſehold of faith." If there be an overplus ſtill, "as you have opportunity, do good unto all men." In ſo doing, you *give all you can*: nay, in a ſound ſenſe, all you have. For all that is laid out in this manner, is really given to God. You render unto God the things

things that are God's not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your house-hold."*

9. O ye Methodists, hear the word of the Lord! I have a message from God to all men; but to *you* above all. For above forty years I have been a Servant to you and to your Fathers. And I have not been as a reed shaken with the wind: I have not varied in my testimony. I have testified to you the very same thing, from the first day even until now. But "who hath believed our report?" I fear not many rich, I fear there is need to apply to some of *you* those terrible words of the Apostle, "Go to now, ye rich men! Weep and howl for the miseries which shall come upon you. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall witness against you, and shall eat your flesh, as it were fire." Certainly it will, unless ye both save all you can, and give all you can. But who of you hath considered this, since you first heard the will of the Lord concerning it? Who is now determined to consider and practice it? By the grace of God, begin to day!

10. O ye *Lovers of money*, hear the word of the Lord! Suppose ye that money, though multiplied as the sand of the sea, can give happiness? Then you are "given up to a strong delusion, to believe a lie:" a palpable lie, confuted daily by a thousand experiments. Open your eyes! Look all around you! Are the richest men the happiest? Have those the largest share of content, who have the largest possessions? Is not the very reverse true? Is it not a common observation, That

* Works vol. 4. page 56.

That the richeſt of men are, in general, the moſt diſcontented, the moſt miſerable? Had not the far greater part of them more content, when they had leſs money? Look into your own breaſts. If you are increaſed in goods, are you proportionably increaſed in happineſs? You have more ſubſtance: but have you more content? You know that in ſeeking happineſs from riches, you are only ſtriving to drink out of empty cups. And let them be painted and gilded ever ſo finely, they are empty ſtill.

11. O ye that *deſire* or *endeavour to be rich*, hear ye the word of the Lord! Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more? Will not even experience teach you wiſdom? Will ye leap into a pit with your eyes open? Why ſhould you any more *fall into temptation?* It cannot be, but temptation will beſet you, as long as you are in the body. But though it ſhould beſet you on every ſide, why will you *enter into it?* There is no neceſſity for this: it is your own voluntary act and deed. Why ſhould you any more plunge yourſelves *into a ſnare*, into the trap Satan has laid for you, that is ready to break your bones in pieces, to cruſh your ſoul to death? After fair warning, why ſhould you ſink any more into *fooliſh and hurtful deſires?* Deſires, as inconſiſtent with reaſon, as they are with religion itſelf! Deſires that have done you more hurt already, than all the treaſures upon earth can countervail.

12. Have they not hurt you already, have they not wounded you in the tendereſt part, by ſlackening, if not utterly deſtroying your *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs?* Have you now the ſame longing that you had once, for the whole image of God? Have you the ſame vehement

desire, as you formerly had, of *going on unto perfection?* Have they not hurt you by weakening your *faith?* Have you now faith's "abiding impression, realizing things to come?" Do you endure, in all temptations from pleasure or pain, "seeing him that is invisible?" Have you every day, and every hour, an uninterrupted sense of his presence? Have they not hurt you, with regard to your *hope?* Have you now a hope full of immortality? Are you still big with earnest expectation of all the great and precious promises? Do you now "taste the powers of the world to come?" Do you "sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus?"

13. Have they not so hurt you, as to stab your religion to the heart? Have they not cooled (if not quenched) your *love of God?* This is easily determined. Have you the same delight in God which you once had? Can you now say,

> "I nothing want beneath, above:
> Happy, happy in thy love!"

I fear not: and if your love of God is in any wise decayed, so also is your love of your neighbour. You are then hurt in the very life and spirit of your religion! If you lose love, you lose all.

14. Are you not hurt with regard to your *humility?* If you are increased in goods, it cannot well be otherwise. Many will think you a better, because you are a richer man: and how can you help thinking so yourself? Especially, considering the commendations which some will give you in simplicity, and many with a design to serve themselves of you.

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If you are hurt in your humility, it will appear by this token: you are not so teachable as you were, not so adviseable: you are not so easy to be convinced, not so easy to be persuaded. You have a much better opinion of your own judgment, and are more attached to your own will. Formerly one might guide you with a thread: now one cannot turn you with a cart-rope. You were glad to be admonished or reproved; but that time is past. And you now account a man your enemy, because he tells you the truth. O let each of you calmly consider this, and see if it be not your own picture!

15. Are you not equally hurt, with regard to your *meekness*? You had once learnt to bear that injury, of him that was meek and lowly in heart. When you were reviled, you reviled not again. You did not return railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. Your love was *not provoked*, but enabled you, on all occasions, to overcome evil with good. Is this your case now? I am afraid not. I fear you cannot *bear all things*. Alas, it may rather be said, you can bear nothing: no injury nor even affront! How quickly are you ruffled? How readily does that occur, "What! to use *me* so? What insolence is this? How did he dare to do it? I am not what I was once. Let him know, I am now able to defend myself." You mean, to revenge yourself. And it is much, if you are not willing as well as able; if you do not take your fellow-servant by the throat.

16. And are you not hurt in your *patience* too? Does your love now "endure all things?" Do you find, "in patience possess your soul," as when

you firſt believed? O what a change is here! You have again learnt, to be frequently out of humour. You are often fretful: you feel, nay, and give way to peeviſhneſs. You find abundance of things go ſo croſs, that you cannot tell how to bear them!

Many years ago I was ſitting with a gentleman in *London*, who feared God greatly: and generally gave away, year by year, nine tenths of his yearly income. A ſervant came in and threw ſome coals on the fire. A puff of ſmoke came out. The Baronet threw himſelf back in his chair and cried out, "O Mr. *Weſley*, theſe are the croſſes I meet with daily!" Would he not have been leſs impatient, if he had had fifty, inſtead of five thouſand pounds a year?

17. But to return. Are not you who have been ſucceſsful in your endeavours to increaſe in ſubſtance, inſenſibly ſunk into ſoftneſs of mind, if not of body too? You no longer rejoice to "endure hardſhip, as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt?" You no longer "ruſh into the kingdom of heaven, and take it as by ſtorm." You do not chearfully and gladly "deny yourſelves, *and* take up your croſs daily." You cannot deny yourſelf the poor pleaſure of a little ſleep, or of a ſoft bed, in order to hear the word, that is able to ſave your ſouls! Indeed, you "cannot go out ſo early in the morning: beſides it is dark: nay, cold; perhaps rainy too. Cold, darkneſs, rain: all theſe together, I can never think of it." You did not ſay ſo when you were a poor man. You then regarded none of theſe things. It is the change of circumſtances which has occaſioned this melancholy change

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in your body and mind: you are but the ſhadow of what you were. What have riches done for you?

"But it cannot be expected I ſhould do as I have done. For I am now grown old." Am not I grown old as well as you? Am not I in my ſeventy-eighth year? Yet by the grace of God, I do not ſlack my pace yet. Neither would *you*, if you were a poor man ſtill.

18. You are ſo deeply hurt, that you have nigh loſt your zeal for works of mercy, as well as of piety. You once puſhed on, through cold or rain, or whatever croſs lay in your way, to ſee the poor, the ſick, the diſtreſt. You went about doing good, and found out thoſe who were not able to find you. You chearfully crept down into their cellars, and climbed up into their garrets:

To ſupply all their wants,
And ſpend and be ſpent in aſſiſting his ſaints.

You found out every ſcene of human miſery, and aſſiſted according to your power:

"Each form of woe your gen'rous pity mov'd;
Your Saviour's face you ſaw, and ſeeing,
lov'd."

Do you now tread in the ſame ſteps? What hinders? Do you fear ſpoiling your ſilken coat? Or is there another lion in the way? Are you afraid of catching vermin? And are you not afraid, leſt the roaring lion ſhould catch *you?* Are you not afraid of him that hath ſaid, "In-

aſmuch as ye have not done it unto the leaſt of theſe, ye have not done it unto me?" What will follow? "Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

19. In time paſt how mindful were you of that word, "Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou ſhalt in any wiſe reprove thy brother, and not ſuffer ſin upon him?" You *did* reprove, directly or indirectly, all thoſe that ſinned in your ſight. And happy conſequences quickly followed. How good was a word ſpoken in ſeaſon? It was often as an arrow from the hand of a giant. Many a heart was pierced. Many of the ſtout-hearted, who ſcorned to hear a ſermon,

> Fell down before his croſs ſubdu'd,
> And felt his arrows dipt in blood.

But which of you now has that compaſſion for the ignorant, and for them that are out of the way? They may wander on for *you*, and plunge into the lake of fire, without let or hindrance. Gold hath ſteeled your hearts. You have ſomething elſe to do.

> "Unhelp'd, unpiti'd let the wretches fall."

20. Thus have I given you, O ye gainers, lovers, poſſeſſors of riches, one more (it may be the laſt) warning. O that it may not be in vain! May God write it upon all your hearts! Though "it is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," yet the things impoſſible with

with men, are poſſible with God. Lord, ſpeak! And even the rich men, that hear theſe words, ſhall enter thy kingdom! Shall "take the kingdom of heaven by violence;" ſhall "ſell all for the pearl of great price!" Shall be "crucified to the world, and count all things dung, that they may win Chriſt!"

SERMON

SERMON XC.

ON DRESS.

1 PETER iii. 3, 4.

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of——wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.

But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

1. ST. *Paul* exhorts all those who desire to "be transformed by the renewal of their minds, *and to* prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Not *to be* conformed to the world." Indeed this exhortation relates more directly to the *wisdom* of the world, which is totally opposite to his "good, and acceptable, and perfect will." But it likewise has a reference, even to the *manners* and *cus-*

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toms of the world, which naturally flow from its wiſdom and ſpirit, and are exactly ſuitable thereto. And it was not beneath the wiſdom of God, to give us punctual directions in this reſpect alſo.

2. Some of theſe, particularly that in the text, deſcend even to the apparel of Chriſtians. And both this text and the parallel one of St. *Paul*, are as expreſs as poſſible. St. *Paul's* words are, [1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.] "I will that women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel; not——with gold, or pearls, or coſtly array: (but which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works"

3. But is it not ſtrange, ſay ſome, that the all-wiſe Spirit of God ſhould condeſcend to take notice of ſuch trifles as theſe? To take notice of ſuch inſignificant trifles? Things of ſo little moment? Or rather of none at all? For what does it ſignify, provided we take care of the ſoul, what the body is covered with? Whether with ſilk or ſackcloth? What harm can there be in the wearing of gold, or ſilver, or precious ſtones? Or any other of thoſe beautiful things, with which God has ſo amply provided us? May we not apply to this, what St. *Paul* has obſerved on another occaſion, That "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected?"

4. It is certain that many who ſincerely fear God, have cordially embraced this opinion. And their practice is ſuitable thereto: they make no ſcruple of conformity to the world, by putting on, as often as occaſion offers, either gold, or pearls, or coſtly apparel. And indeed they are not well pleaſed with thoſe that think it their duty to reject them: the uſing of which they apprehend to be one branch of Chriſtian liberty. Yea, ſome have

have gone considerably farther: even so far, as to make it a point, to bring those who had refrained from them for some time, to make use of them again: assuring them, that it was mere superstition to think there was any harm in them. Nay farther still, a very respectable person has said in express terms, "I do not desire, that any who *dress plain*, should be in our Society." It is therefore certainly worth our while to consider this matter thoroughly: seriously to enquire, Whether there is any harm in the putting on of gold, or jewels, or costly apparel?

5. But before we enter on the subject, let it be observed, That slovenliness is no part of Religion: that neither this, nor any text of Scripture, condemns neatness of apparel: certainly this is a duty, not a sin: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Agreeably to this, good Mr. *Herbert* advises every one that fears God,

"Let thy mind's sweetness have its operation
Upon thy person, clothes and habitation."

And surely every one should attend to this if he would not have the good that is in him evil spoken of.

6. Another mistake with regard to apparel, has been common in the religious world. It has been supposed by some, that there ought to be no difference at all in the apparel of Christians. But neither these texts, nor any other in the Book of God, teaches any such thing, or direct that the dress of the Master or Mistress should be nothing different from that of their servants. There may undoubtedly, be a moderate difference, of apparel between persons of different station. And

And where the eye is ſingle, this will eaſily be adjuſted by the rules of Chriſtian Prudence

7. Yea, it may be doubted, whether any part of Scripture forbids (at leaſt I know not any) thoſe in any nation that are inveſted with Supreme Authority, to be arrayed in gold and coſtly apparel; to adorn their immediate Attendants, or Magiſtrates, or Officers with the ſame. It is not improbable, that our bleſſed Lord intended to give countenance to this cuſtom, when he ſaid, without the leaſt mark of cenſure, or diſapprobation, "Behold, thoſe that wear gorgeous [*ſplendid*] apparel, are in kings courts," Luke vii. 25.

8. What is then the meaning of theſe Scriptures? What is it which they forbid? They manifeſtly forbid ordinary Chriſtians, thoſe in the lower or middle ranks of life, to be adorned with gold, or pearls, or coſtly apparel. But why? What harm is there herein? This deſerves our ſerious conſideration. But it is highly expedient, or rather abſolutely neceſſary for all who would conſider it to any purpoſe, as far as is poſſible to diveſt themſelves of all prejudice, and to ſtand open to conviction: is it not neceſſary likewiſe in the higheſt degree, that they ſhould earneſtly beſeech the Father of lights, that "by his holy inſpiration they may think the things that are right, and by his merciful guidance perform the ſame?" Then they will not ſay, no not in their hearts, (as I fear too many have done) what the famous Jew ſaid to the Chriſtian, "Thou ſhalt not perſuade me, though thou haſt perſuaded me."

9. The queſtion is, What harm does it do, to adorn ourſelves with gold, or pearls, or coſtly array?

array? Suppose you can *afford* it? That is, suppose it does not hurt or impoverish your family? The first harm it does is, It genders *Pride*, and where it is already, increases it. Whoever narrowly observes what passes in his own heart, will easily discern this. Nothing is more natural than to think ourselves better, because we are dressed in better clothes. And it is scarce possible for a man to wear costly apparel, without, in some measure valuing himself upon it. One of the old Heathens was so well apprised of this, that when he had a spite to a poor man, and had a mind to turn his head, he made him a present of a suit of fine clothes.

Eutrapelus, cuicunq; nocere volebat,
Vestimenta dabat pretiosa.

He could not then but imagine himself to be as much better, as he was finer than his neighbour. And how many thousands, not only Lords and Gentlemen in *England*, but honest Tradesmen, argue the same way? Inferring the superior value of their persons from the value of their clothes.

10. "But may not one man be as proud though clad in sackcloth, as another is, though clad in cloth of gold?" As this argument meets us at every turn, and is supposed to be unanswerable, it will be worth while to answer it once for all, and to shew the utter emptiness of it. "May not then one clad in sackcloth, you ask, be as proud as he that is clad in cloth of gold?" I answer, Certainly he may: I suppose, no one doubts of it. And what inference can you draw from this? Take a parallel case. One man that drinks a cup of wholesome wine may be as sick as another that

that drinks poiſon. But does this prove that the poiſon has no more tendency to hurt a man than the wine? Or does it excuſe any man for taking what has a natural tendency to make him ſick? Now to apply, experience ſhews that fine clothes have a natural tendency to make a man ſick of pride. Plain clothes have not. Although it is true, you may be ſick of pride in theſe alſo, yet they have no natural tendency, either to cauſe or increaſe this ſickneſs. Therefore all that deſire to be clothed with humility, abſtain from that poiſon.

11. Secondly, The wearing gay or coſtly apparel naturally tends to breed and to increaſe *Vanity*. By vanity I here mean the love and deſire of being admired and praiſed. Every one of you that is fond of dreſs, has a witneſs of this in your own boſom. Whether you will confeſs it before man or no, you are convinced of this before God. You know in your hearts, it is with a view to be admired, that you thus adorn yourſelves: and that you would not be at the pains, were none to ſee you, but God and his holy angels. Now the more you indulge this fooliſh deſire, the more it grows upon you. You have vanity enough by nature; but by thus indulging it, you increaſe it a hundred-fold. O ſtop! Aim at pleaſing God alone, and all theſe ornaments will drop off.

12. Thirdly, the wearing of gay and coſtly apparel, naturally tends to beget *Anger*, and every turbulent and uneaſy paſſion. And it is on this very account, that the Apoſtle places this "outward adorning" in direct oppoſition to the "ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit." How

remarkably does he add, "Which is in the ſight of God of great price:"

Than gold or pearls more precious far,
And brighter than the morning-ſtar.

None can eaſily conceive, unleſs himſelf were to make the ſad experiment, the contrariety there is between the *outward adorning*, and this *inward quietneſs of ſpirit*. You never can thoroughly enjoy this, while you are fond of the other. It is only while you ſit looſe to that *outward adorning*, that you can *in patience poſſeſs your ſoul*. Then only when you have caſt off your fondneſs for dreſs, will the peace of God reign in your hearts.

13. Fourthly, Gay and coſtly apparel directly tends to create and inflame luſt. I was in doubt whether to name this brutal appetite. Or, in order to ſpare delicate ears, to expreſs it by ſome gentle circumlocution. (Like the Dean, who ſome years ago, told his audience at *Whitehall*, "If you do not repent, you will go to a place, which I have too much manners to name before this good company.") But I think it beſt to ſpeak out: ſince the more the word ſhocks your ears, the more it may arm your heart. The fact is plain and undeniable: it has this effect both on the wearer and the beholder. To the former, our elegant Poet, *Cowley*, addreſſes thoſe fine lines

"Th' adorning thee with ſo much art
Is but a barbarous ſkill;
'Tis like the poiſoning of a dart,
Too apt before to kill."

That is, (to expreſs the matter in the plain terms, without

without any colouring) "You poiſon the beholder, with far more of this baſe appetite, than otherwiſe he would feel." Did you not *know*, this would be the natural conſequence of your elegant adorning? To puſh the queſtion home, did you not *deſire*, did you not *deſign* it ſhould? And yet all the time, how did you

"Set to public view
A ſpecious face of innocence and virtue."

Meanwhile you do not yourſelf eſcape the ſnare which you ſpread for others. The dart recoils, and you are infected with the ſame poiſon with which you infected them. You kindle a flame which at the ſame time conſumes both yourſelf and your admirers. And it is well, if it does not plunge both you and them into the flames of hell.

14. Fifthly, The wearing coſtly array is directly oppoſite to the being *adorned with good works*. Nothing can be more evident than this: for the more you lay out on your own apparel, the leſs you have left to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to lodge the ſtrangers, to relieve thoſe that are ſick and in priſon, and to leſſen the numberleſs afflictions to which we are expoſed in this vale of tears. And here is no room for the evaſion uſed before, "I may be as *humble* in cloth of gold, as in ſackcloth." If you could be as *humble*, when you chuſe coſtly, as when you chooſe plain apparel, (which I flatly deny) yet you could not be as *beneficent*, as plenteous in good works. Every thing which you ſave from your own apparel, you may expend in clothing the naked, and relieving the various neceſſities of the poor, whom ye *have always with you*. Therefore

every ſhilling which you needleſsly ſpend on your apparel, is in effect ſtolen from God and the poor. And how many precious opportunities of doing good have you defrauded yourſelf of? How often have you diſabled yourſelf from doing good, by purchaſing what you did not want? For what end did you buy theſe ornaments? To pleaſe God? No: but to pleaſe your own fancy, or to gain the admiration and applauſe of thoſe that were no wiſer than yourſelf. How much good might you have done with that money? And what an irreparable loſs have you ſuſtained by not doing it, if it be true that the day is at hand, when "every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour?"

15. I pray conſider this well. Perhaps you have not ſeen it in this light before. When you are laying out that money in coſtly apparel, which you could have otherwiſe ſpared for the poor, you thereby deprive them of what God, the Proprietor of all, had lodged in your hands for their uſe. If ſo, what you put upon yourſelf, you are, in effect, tearing from the back of the naked; as the coſtly and delicate food which you eat, you are ſnatching from the mouth of the hungry. For mercy, for pity, for Chriſt's ſake, for the honour of his goſpel, ſtay your hand. Do not throw this money away. Do not lay out on nothing, yea worſe than nothing, what may clothe your poor, naked, ſhivering fellow-creature!

16. Many years ago, when I was at *Oxford*, in a cold winter's day, a young maid (one of thoſe we kept at ſchool) called upon me. I ſaid, You ſeem half ſtarved. Have you nothing to cover you but that thin linen gown? She ſaid, "Sir, this is all I have?" I put my hand in my pocket; but

but found I had ſcarce any money left, having juſt paid away what I had. It immediately ſtruck me, Will thy Maſter ſay, "Well done, good and faithful Steward! Thou haſt adorned thy walls with money which might have ſcreened this poor creature from the cold!" O Juſtice! O Mercy! Are not theſe pictures the blood of this poor maid! See thy expenſive apparel in the ſame light: thy Gown, Hat, Head-dreſs! Every thing about thee, which coſt more than chriſtian duty required thee to lay out, is the blood of the poor! O be wiſe for the time to come! Be more merciful! More faithful to God and man! More abundantly *adorned* (like men and women profeſſing godlineſs) *with good works.*

17. It is true, great allowance is to be made for thoſe who have never been warned of theſe things, and perhaps do not know, that there is a word in the Bible, which forbids coſtly apparel. But what is *That* to *You?* You have been warned over and over; yea, in the plaineſt manner poſſible. And what have you profited thereby? Do not you ſtill dreſs like other people of the ſame fortune? Is not your dreſs as gay, as expenſive as theirs, who never had any ſuch warning? As expenſive as it would have been, if you had never heard a word ſaid about it? O how will you anſwer this, when you and I ſtand together at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt! Nay, have not many of you grown finer as faſt as you have grown richer? As you increaſed in ſubſtance, have you not increaſed in dreſs? Witneſs the profuſion of ribbands, gauze, or linen about your heads! What have you profited then by bearing the reproach of Chriſt? By being called Methodiſts? Are you not as faſhionably dreſt as

others of your rank that are no Methodists? Do you ask, "But may we not as well buy fashionable things as unfashionable?" I answer, Not if they give you a bold, immodest look, (as those huge hats, bonnets, head-dresses do.) And not if they cost more. "But I can *afford* it:" O lay aside for ever that idle, nonsensical word! No Christian can *afford* to waste any part of the substance which God has entrusted him with. How long are you to stay here! May not you to morrow, perhaps to-night, be summoned to arise and go hence, in order to give an account of this, and all your talents to the Judge of quick and dead?

18. How then can it be, that after so many warnings, you persist in the same folly? Is it not hence? There are still among you, some that neither profit themselves by all they hear, nor are willing that others should: and these, if any of you are almost persuaded to dress as Christians, reason, and rally, and laugh you out of it. O ye pretty triflers, I entreat you not to do the devil's work any longer! Whatever ye do yourselves, do not harden the hearts of others. And you that are of a better mind, avoid these tempters with all possible care. And if you come where any of them are, either beg them to be silent on the head, or quit the room.

19. Sixthly, The putting on of costly apparel is directly opposite to what the Apostle terms *the hidden man of the heart*, that is, to the whole *image of God*, wherein we were created, and which is stamped anew upon the heart of every Christian believer: opposite to *the mind which was in Christ Jesus*, and the whole nature of inward holiness. All the time you are studying this *outward adorning*, the whole inward work of the Spirit

Spirit ſtands ſtill: or rather goes back, though by very gentle and almoſt imperceptible degrees. Inſtead of growing more heavenly minded, you are more and more earthly minded. If you once had fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, it now gradually declines: and you inſenſibly ſink deeper and deeper into the ſpirit of the world; into fooliſh and hurtful deſires, and grovelling appetites. All theſe evils, and a thouſand more, ſpring from that one root, indulging yourſelf in coſtly apparel.

20. Why then does not every one that either loves or fears God, flee from it as from the face of a ſerpent? Why are *you* ſtill ſo conformable to the irrational, ſinful cuſtoms of a frantic world? Why do you ſtill deſpiſe the expreſs commandment of God, uttered in the plaineſt terms? You ſee the light: why do not you follow the light of your own mind? Your conſcience tells you the truth: why do you not obey the dictates of your own conſcience?

21. You anſwer, "Why, Univerſal Cuſtom is againſt me; and I know not how to ſtem the mighty torrent?" Not only the profane, but the religious world, run violently the other way. Look into, I do not ſay, the Theatres, but the Churches, nay, and the Meetings of every denomination; (except a few old faſhioned *Quakers*, or the people called *Moravians*) look into the congregations, in *London* or elſewhere, of thoſe that are ſtiled *Goſpel Miniſters*: look into *Northampton* Chapel, yea, into the Tabernacle, or the Chapel in *Tottenham Court-Road*: nay, look into the Chapel in *Weſt-Street*, or that in the *City-Road*: look at the very people that ſit under the pulpit, or by the ſide of it: and are not *thoſe that can afford*

afford it (I can hardly refrain from doing them the honour of naming their names) as fashionably adorned, as those of the same rank in other places?

22. This is a melancholy truth. I am ashamed of it: but I know not how to help it. I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that it is not my fault. The trumpet has not *given an uncertain sound*, for near fifty years last past. O God! thou knowest I have borne a clear and a faithful testimony. In print, in preaching, in meeting the Society, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I am therefore clear of the blood of those that will not hear. It lies upon their own head.

23. I warn you once more, in the name, and in the presence of God, that the number of those that rebel against God, is no excuse for your rebellion. He hath expressly told us, "Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil." It was said of a great, good man, he

> "Fear'd not, had heaven decreed it, to have stood
> Adverse against a world, and singly good."

Who of you desire to share in that glorious character? To stand adverse against a world? If millions condemn you, it will be enough, that you are acquitted by God and your own conscience.

24. "Nay, I think, say some, I could bear the contempt or reproach of all the world beside. I regard none but my own relations, those especially that are of my own household. My father, my mother, my brothers and sisters (and perhaps

perhaps one that is nearer than them all) are teazing me continually." This is a trial indeed, such as very few can judge of, but those that bear it. "*I* have not strength to bear it." No, not of your own: certainly you have not. But *there is strength laid up for* you *on one that is mighty!* His grace is sufficient for you; and he now sees your case, and is just ready to give it you. Meantime remember his awful declaration, touching them that regard man more than God, "He that loveth father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife, more than me is not worthy of me."

25. But are there not some among you that did once renounce this conformity to the world, and dress in every point neat and plain, suitable to your profession? Why then did you not persevere therein? Why did you turn back from the good way? Did you contract an acquaintance, perhaps a friendship, with some that were still fond of dress? It is no wonder then that you was sooner or later moved,

"To measure back your steps to earth again."

No less was to be expected, than that one sin would lead you on to another. It was one sin, to contract a friendship with any that knew not God: for "know ye not, that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" And this led you back into another, into that conformity to the world, from which ye had clean escaped. But what are you to do now? Why, if you are wise, escape for your life: no delay: look not behind you! Without loss of time, renounce the cause and the effect together. Now, to day, before the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, cut off

off at one ſtroke that ſinful friendſhip with the ungodly, and that ſinful conformity to the world! Determine this day! Do not delay till to-morrow, leſt you delay for ever. For God's ſake, for your own ſoul's ſake, fix your reſolution now!

26. I conjure you all who have any regard for *me*, ſhew me before I go hence, that I have not laboured, even in this reſpect, in vain, for near half a century. Let me ſee, before I die, a Methodiſt congregation, full as plain dreſt as a Quaker congregation. Only be more conſiſtent with yourſelves. Let your dreſs be *cheap* as well as plain. Otherwiſe you do but trifle with God and me, and your own ſouls. I pray, let there be no coſtly ſilks among you, how grave ſoever they may be. Let there be no *Quaker-linen*, proverbially ſo called, for their exquiſite fineneſs: no Bruſſels lace, no Elephantine Hats or Bonnets, thoſe ſcandals of Female Modeſty. Be all of a piece, dreſt from head to foot, as perſons *profeſſing godlineſs*: profeſſing to do every thing ſmall and great, with the ſingle view of pleaſing God.

27. Let none of you, who are rich in this world, endeavour to excuſe yourſelves from this, by talking nonſenſe. It is ſtark, ſtaring nonſenſe to ſay, "O I can *afford* this or that." If you have regard to common ſenſe, let that ſilly word never come out of your mouth. No man living can *afford* to waſte any part of what God has committed to his truſt. None can *afford* to throw any part of that food and raiment into the ſea, which was lodged with him, on purpoſe to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. And it is far worſe than ſimple waſte, to ſpend any part of it

it in gay or coſtly apparel. For this is no leſs, than to turn wholeſome food into deadly poiſon. It is giving ſo much money, to poiſon both yourſelf and others, as far as your example ſpreads, with pride, vanity, anger, luſt, love of the world, and a thouſand *fooliſh and hurtful deſires*, which tend to *pierce* them *through with many ſorrows*. And is there no harm in all this? O God ariſe, and maintain thy own cauſe! Let not men or devils any longer put out our eyes, and lead us blind-fold into the pit of deſtruction.

28. I beſeech you, every man, that is here preſent before God, every woman, young or old, married or ſingle, yea, every child that knows good from evil, take this to yourſelf. Each of you for one, take the Apoſtle's advice: at leaſt, hinder not others from taking it. I beſeech you, O ye parents, do not hinder your children from following their own convictions: even though you might think they would *look prettier*, if they were adorned with ſuch gewgaws as other children wear. I beſeech you, O ye huſbands, do not hinder your wives: you, O ye wives, do not hinder your huſbands, either by word or deed, from acting juſt as they are perſuaded in their own minds. Above all, I conjure you, ye half Methodiſts, you that trim between us and the world, you that frequently, perhaps conſtantly hear our preaching, but are in no farther connexion with us: yea, and all you that were once in full connexion with us, but are not ſo now: whatever ye do yourſelves, do not ſay one word to hinder others from recovering, and practiſing the advice which has been now given! Yet a little while and we ſhall not need theſe poor coverings: for this corruptible body ſhall put on incorruption.

corruption. Yet a few days hence, and this mortal body ſhall put on immortality. In the meantime, let this be our only care, *to put off the old man*, our old nature, *which is corrupt*, which is altogether evil: and to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs." In particular, "put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindneſs, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering." Yea, to ſum up all in one word, "put on Chriſt, that when he ſhall appear, ye may appear with him in glory."

SERMON

SERMON XCI.

The more excellent Way.

1 Cor. xii. 31.

Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts; and yet I ſhew unto you a more excellent way.

1. IN the preceding verſes St. *Paul* has been ſpeaking of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt: ſuch as healing the ſick, prophetying in the proper ſenſe of the word, that is, foretelling things to come, ſpeaking with ſtrange tongues, ſuch as the ſpeaker had never learned, and the miraculous interpretation of tongues. And theſe gifts the Apoſtle allows to be deſirable: yea, he exhorts the Corinthians, at leaſt the Teachers among them (to whom chiefly, if not ſolely, they were wont to be given in the firſt ages of the Church) to *covet* them *earneſtly*, that thereby they might be qualified to be more uſeful either to Chriſtians or Heathens. *And yet*,

ſays he, *I ſhew unto you a more excellent way*, far more deſirable than all theſe put together. Inaſmuch as it will infallibly lead you to happineſs, both in this world and in the world to come; whereas you might have all thoſe gifts, yea, in the higheſt degree, and yet be miſerable both in time and eternity.

2. It does not appear, that theſe extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We ſeldom hear of them after that fatal period, when the Emperor *Conſtantine* called himſelf a Chriſtian: and from a vain imagination of promoting the Chriſtian cauſe thereby, heaped riches and power, and honour upon the Chriſtians in general; but in particular, upon the Chriſtian Clergy. From this time they almoſt totally ceaſed: very few inſtances of the kind were found. The cauſe of this was not (as has been vulgarly ſuppoſed) "becauſe there was no more occaſion for them;" becauſe all the world was become Chriſtians. This is a miſerable miſtake: not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Chriſtians. The real cauſe was, *the love of many*, almoſt all Chriſtians, ſo called, was *waxed cold*. The Chriſtians had no more of the Spirit of Chriſt, than the other heathens. The Son of man when he came to examine his Church, could hardly *find faith upon earth*. This was the real cauſe, why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were no longer to be found in the Chriſtian Church; becauſe the Chriſtians were turned Heathens again, and had only the dead form left.

3. However I would not at preſent ſpeak of theſe, of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, but of the ordinary: and theſe likewiſe

we

we may *covet earneſtly*, in order to be more uſeful in our generation. With this view we may covet "the gift of *Convincing* ſpeech," in order to "ſound the unbelieving heart:" and the gift of *Perſuaſion* to move the affections, as well as enlighten the underſtanding. We may covet *Knowledge*, both of the word and the works of God, whether of Providence or Grace. We may deſire a meaſure of that Faith which on particular occaſions, wherein the glory of God or the happineſs of men is nearly concerned, goes far beyond the power of natural cauſes. We may deſire an eaſy elocution, a pleaſing addreſs, with reſignation to the will of our Lord; yea, whatever would enable us, as we have opportunity, to be uſeful wherever we are. Theſe gifts we may innocently deſire: but there is a more excellent way.

4. The way of Love, of loving all men for God's ſake, of humble, gentle, patient love is that which the Apoſtle ſo admirably deſcribes in the enſuing chapter. And without this, he aſſures us, all eloquence, knowledge, all faith, all works, and all ſufferings, are of no more value in the ſight of God, than "ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal:" and are not of the leaſt avail, toward our eternal ſalvation. Without this, all we know, all we believe, all we do, all we ſuffer, will profit us nothing in the great day of accounts.

5. But at preſent I would take a different view of the text, and point out a more excellent way in another ſenſe. It is the obſervation of an ancient writer, That there have been from the beginning two orders of Chriſtians. The one lived an innocent life, conforming in all things

not sinful, to the customs and fashions of the world, doing many good works, abstaining from gross evils, and attending the ordinances of God. They endeavoured in general to have a conscience void of offence in their behaviour, but did not aim at any particular strictness, being in most things like their neighbours. The other Christians not only abstained from all appearance of evil, were zealous of good works in every kind, and attended all the ordinances of God; but likewise used all diligence to attain the whole mind that was in Christ, and laboured to walk in every point, as their beloved Master. In order to this, they walked in a constant course of universal self-denial, trampling on every pleasure which they were not divinely conscious prepared them for taking pleasure in God. They took up their cross daily. They strove, they agonized without intermission, to enter in at the strait gate. This one thing they did; they spared no pains to arrive at the summit of Christian Holiness: "leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to go on to perfection: to know all that love of God which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of God."

6. From long experience and observation I am inclined to think, that whoever finds redemption in the blood of Jesus, whoever is justified, has then the choice of walking in the higher or lower path. I believe, the holy Spirit at that time, sets before him the more excellent way, and incites him to walk therein, to choose the narrowest path in the narrow way, to aspire after the heights and depths of Holiness, after the entire image of God. But if he does not accept this offer, he insensibly declines into the lower order of Christians. He

still

ſtill goes on in what may be called a good way, ſerving God in his degree, and finds mercy in the cloſe of life, through the blood of the Covenant.

7. I would be far from quenching the ſmoking flax, from diſcouraging thoſe that ſerve God in a low degree. But I could not wiſh them to ſtop here: I would encourage them to come up higher, without thundering hell and damnation in their ears, without condemning the way wherein they were, telling them it is the way that leads to deſtruction. I will endeavour to point out to them, what is in every reſpect a more excellent way.

8. Let it be well remembered, I do not affirm, that all who do not walk in this way, are in the high road to hell. But this much I muſt affirm, they will not have ſo high a place in heaven, as they would have had, if they had choſen the better part: and will this be a ſmall loſs? The having ſo many fewer ſtars in your crown of glory! Will it be a little thing, to have a lower place than you might have had in the kingdom of your Father? Certainly there will be no ſorrow in heaven: there all tears will be wiped from our eyes. But if it were poſſible grief could enter there, we ſhould grieve at that irreparable loſs! Irreparable then, but not now! Now, by the grace of God, we may chooſe the "more excellent way." Let us now compare this in a few particulars, with the way wherein moſt Chriſtians walk.

I. 1. To begin at the beginning of the day. It is the manner of the generality of Chriſtians, if they are not obliged to work for their living,

to rise, particularly in winter, at eight or nine in the morning, after having lain in bed eight or nine, if not more hours. I do not say now (as I should have been very apt to do fifty years ago) that all who indulge themselves in this manner, are in the way to hell. But neither can I say, they are in the way to heaven, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily. Sure I am, there is a more excellent way, to promote health both of body and mind. From an observation of more than sixty years, I have learnt, that men in health require at an average, from six to seven hours sleep; and healthy women a little more, from seven to eight, in four and twenty hours. I know this quantity of sleep to be most advantageous to the body as well as the soul. It is preferable to any medicine which I have known, both for preventing and removing nervous disorders. It is therefore undoubtedly the more excellent way, in defiance of fashion and custom, to take just so much sleep, as experience proves our nature to require; seeing this is indisputably most conducive both to bodily and spiritual health. And why should not you walk in this way? Because it is difficult? Nay, with men it is impossible. But all things are possible with God; and by his grace, all things will be possible to *you*. Only continue constant in prayer, and you will find this, not only possible but easy: yea, and it will be far easier, to rise early constantly, than to do it sometimes. But then you must begin at the right end, if you would rise early, you must sleep early. Impose it upon yourself, unless when something extraordinary occurs, to go to bed at a fixed hour. Then the difficulty

difficulty of it will soon be over; but the advantage of it will remain for ever.

II. The generality of Christians as soon as they rise, they are accustomed to use some kind of *prayer:* and probably to use the same form still, which they learned when they were eight or ten years old. Now I do not condemn those who proceed thus, (though many do) as mocking God; though they have used the same form, without any variation, for twenty or thirty years together. But surely there is a more excellent way of ordering our private devotions. What if you were to follow the advice given by that great and good man, Mr *Law*, on this subject? Consider both your outward and inward state and vary your prayers accordingly. For instance: suppose your outward state is prosperous: suppose you are in a state of health, ease and plenty, having your lot cast among kind relations, good neighbours, and agreeable friends, that love you and you them: then your outward state manifestly calls for praise and thanksgiving to God. On the other hand, if you are in a state of adversity; if God has laid trouble upon your loins; if you are in poverty, in want, in outward distress; if you are in imminent danger; if you are in pain and sickness: then you are clearly called to pour out your soul before God, in such prayer as is suited to your circumstances. In like manner you may suit your devotions to your inward state, the present state of your mind. Is your soul in heaviness, either from a sense of sin, or through manifold temptations? Then let your prayer consist of such confessions, petitions, and supplications as are agreeable to your distressed situation

of

of mind. On the contrary, is your ſoul in peace? Are you rejoicing in God? Are his conſolations not ſmall with you? Then ſay with the Pſalmiſt, "Thou art my God, and I will love thee: thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee." You may likewiſe when you have time, add to your other devotions, a little reading and meditation: and perhaps a pſalm of praiſe, the natural effuſion of a thankful heart. You muſt certainly ſee, that this is a more excellent way than the poor, dry form which you uſed before.

III. 1. The generality of Chriſtians, after uſing ſome prayer, uſually apply themſelves to the *buſineſs* of their calling. Every man that has any pretence to be a Chriſtian, will not fail to do this: ſeeing it is impoſſible that an idle man can be a good man: ſloth being inconſiſtent with religion. But with what view? For what end do you undertake and follow your worldly buſineſs? "To provide things neceſſary for myſelf and my family." It is a good anſwer as far it goes; but it does not go far enough. For a Turk or a Heathen goes ſo far; does his work for the very ſame ends. But a Chriſtian may go abundantly farther; his end in all his labour is, to pleaſe God; to do, not his own will, but the will of him that ſent him into the world: for this very purpoſe, to do the will of God on earth, as angels do in heaven. He works for eternity. He "labours not for the meat that perisheth, (this is the ſmalleſt part of his motive) but for that which endureth to everlaſting life." Is not this *a more excellent way?*

2. Again. In what *manner* do you tranſact your worldly buſineſs? I truſt with *diligence*; whatever

whatever your hand findeth to do, doing it with your might: in juſtice, rendering to all their due, in every circumſtance of life: yea, and in mercy, doing unto every man what you would he ſhould do unto you. This is well: but a Chriſtian is called to go ſtill farther, to add piety, to juſtice; to intermix prayer, eſpecially the prayer of the heart, with all the labour of his hands. Without this, all his diligence and juſtice only ſhew him to be an honeſt Heathen; and many there are who profeſs the Chriſtian religion, that go no farther than honeſt Heatheniſm.

3. Yet again. In what *ſpirit* do you go through your buſineſs? In the ſpirit of the world, or in the ſpirit of Chriſt? I am afraid thouſands of thoſe who are called good Chriſtians, do not underſtand the queſtion. If you act in the ſpirit of Chriſt, you carry the end you at firſt propoſed, through all your work from firſt to laſt. You do every thing in the ſpirit of ſacrifice, giving up your will to the will of God, and continually aiming, not at eaſe, pleaſure, or riches, not at any thing this ſhort enduring world can give; but merely at the glory of God. Now can any one deny, that this is the moſt excellent way of purſuing worldly buſineſs?

IV. 1. But theſe tenements of clay which we bear about us, require conſtant reparation, or they will ſink into the earth from which they were taken, even ſooner than nature requires. Daily food is neceſſary to prevent this, to repair the decays of nature. It was common in the Heathen world, when they were about to uſe this, to take meat or even drink, *libare pateram Jovi*, to pour

out

out a little to the honour of their god: although the gods of the Heathens were but devils, as the Apoſtle juſtly obſerves. "It ſeems, ſays a late Writer, there was once ſome ſuch cuſtom as this in our own country. For we ſtill frequently ſee a Gentleman before he ſits down to dinner in his own houſe, holding his hat before his face, and perhaps ſeeming to ſay ſomething: though he generally does it in ſuch a manner, that no one can tell what he ſays." Now what if inſtead of this, every head of a family, before he ſat down to eat and drink, either morning, noon or night (for the reaſon of the thing is the ſame at every hour of the day) was ſeriouſly to aſk a bleſſing from God, on what he was about to take. Yea, and afterward, ſeriouſly to return thanks to the Giver of all bleſſings: would not this be a more excellent way, than to uſe that dull farce, which is worſe than nothing, being in reality no other than mockery both of God and man?

2. As to the *quantity* of their food, good ſort of men do not uſually eat to exceſs. At leaſt not ſo far as to make themſelves ſick with meat, or to intoxicate themſelves with drink. And as to the manner of taking it, it is uſually innocent, mixt with a little mirth, which is ſaid to help digeſtion. So far, ſo good. And provided they take only that meaſure of plain, cheap, wholeſome food, which moſt promotes health both of body and mind, there will be no cauſe of blame. Neither can I require you to take that advice of Mr. *Herbert*, though he was a good man:

"Take thy meat: think it duſt: then eat a bit,
And ſay with all, earth to earth I commit."

This

This is too melancholy; it does not suit with that cheerfulness, which is highly proper at a christian meal. Permit me to illustrate this subject with a little story. The king of *France* one day pursuing the chace, outrode all his company, who after seeking him some time, found him sitting in a cottage eating bread and cheese. Seeing them, he cried out, Where have I lived all my time? I never before tasted so good food in my life! "Sire, said one of them, you never had so *good sauce* before, for you were never hungry." Now it is true, Hunger is a good sauce: but there is one that is better still; that is, Thankfulness. Sure that is the most agreeable food, which is seasoned with this. And why should not yours at every meal? You need not then fix your eye on death; but receive every morsel as a pledge of life eternal. The Author of your being gives you in this food, not only a reprieve from death, but an earnest, that in a little time, *death* shall *be swallowed up in victory.*

3. The time of taking our food is usually a time of *conversation* also: as it is natural, to refresh our minds while we refresh our bodies. Let us consider a little, in what manner the generality of Christians usually converse together. What are the ordinary subjects of their conversation? If it is harmless (as one would hope it is) if there be nothing in it profane, nothing immodest, nothing untrue, or unkind: if there be no tale-bearing, backbiting or evil speaking, they have reason to praise God for his restraining grace. But there is more than this implied, in *ordering* our *conversation aright.* In order to this it is needful, first, That *your communication*, that is, discourse or conversation *be good*, that is be

materially

materially good, on good ſubjects; not fluttering about any thing that occurs. For what have you to do with Courts and Kings? It is not your buſineſs to

"Fight o'er the wars, reform the ſtate,"

unleſs when ſome remarkable event calls for the acknowledgment of the juſtice or mercy of God. You *muſt* indeed ſometimes talk of worldly things; otherwiſe we may as well go out of the world. But it ſhould be only ſo far as is needful: then we ſhould return to a better ſubject. Secondly, Let your converſation be *to the uſe of edifying*; calculated to edify either the ſpeaker or the hearers or both: to build them up, as each has particular need, either in faith, or love, or holineſs: Thirdly, See that it not only gives entertainment, but in one kind or other, *miniſter grace to the hearers*. Now is not this a more excellent way of *converſing*, than the harmleſs way above-mentioned.

V. 1. We have ſeen what is the more excellent way, of ordering our converſation, as well as our buſineſs. But we cannot be always intent upon buſineſs: both our bodies and minds require ſome relaxation. We need intervals of diverſion from buſineſs: it will be neceſſary to be very explicit upon this head, as it is a point which has been much miſunderſtood.

2. Diverſions are of various kinds. Some are almoſt peculiar to men, as the ſports of the field: Hunting, Shooting, Fiſhing, wherein not many women, (I ſhould ſay, Ladies) are concerned. Others are indifferently uſed by perſons of both ſexes:

ſexes: ſome of which are of a more public nature: as Races, Maſquerades, Plays, Aſſemblies, Balls. Others are chiefly uſed in private houſes, as Cards, Dancing and Muſic: to which we may add, The reading of Plays, Novels, Romances, News-Papers, and faſhionable Poetry.

3. Some diverſions indeed which were formerly in great requeſt, are now fallen into diſrepute. The Nobility and Gentry (in *England* at leaſt) ſeem totally to diſregard the once faſhionable diverſion of *Hawking*: and the vulgar themſelves are no longer diverted, by men hacking and hewing each other in pieces at *Broad ſword*. The noble game of *Quarter-ſtaff* likewiſe is now exerciſed by very few. Yea, *Cudgelling* has loſt its honour, even in *Wales* itſelf. *Bear-beating* alſo is now very ſeldom ſeen, and *Bull beating* not very often. And it ſeems *Cock-fighting* would totally ceaſe in *England*, were it not for two or three Right Honourable Patrons.

4. It is not needful to ſay any thing more of theſe foul "remains of *Gothic* barbarity," than that they are a reproach, not only to all religion, but even to human nature. One would not paſs ſo ſevere a cenſure on the ſports of the field. Let thoſe who have nothing better to do, ſtill run Foxes and Hares out of breath. Neither need much be ſaid about Horſe-races, till ſome man of ſenſe will undertake to defend them. It ſeems a great deal more may be ſaid in defence of ſeeing a ſerious *Tragedy*. I could not do it with a clear conſcience; at leaſt not in an *Engliſh* Theatre, the ſink of all profaneneſs and debauchery. I cannot ſay quite ſo much for *Balls* or *Aſſemblies*, which though more reputable than *Maſquerades*, yet muſt be allowed

by all impartial perſons to have exactly the ſame tendency. So undoubtedly have all Public Dancings. And the ſame tendency they muſt have, unleſs the ſame caution obtained among modern Chriſtians which was obſerved among the ancient Heathens. With them men and women never danced together; but always in ſeparate rooms. This was always obſerved in ancient *Greece*, and for ſeveral ages at *Rome*: where a woman dancing in company with men, would have at once been ſet down for a proſtitute. Of playing at *Cards*, I ſay the ſame as of ſeeing plays. I could not do it with a clear conſcience. But I paſs no ſentence on thoſe that are otherwiſe minded. I leave them to their own Maſter: to him let them ſtand or fall.

5. But ſuppoſing theſe, as well as the reading of Plays, Novels, News Papers and the like, to be quite *innocent diverſions*, yet are there not *more excellent ways* of diverting themſelves, for thoſe that love or fear God? Would men of fortune divert themſelves in the open air? They may do it by cultivating and improving their lands, by planting their grounds, by laying out, carrying on, and perfecting their gardens and orchards. At other times they may viſit and converſe with the moſt ſerious and ſenſible of their neighbours: or they may viſit the ſick, the poor, the widows, and fatherleſs in their affliction. Do they deſire to divert themſelves in the houſe? They may read uſeful Hiſtory, pious and elegant Poetry, or ſeveral branches of Natural Philoſophy. If you have time, you may divert yourſelf by Muſic, and perhaps by Philoſophical Experiments. But above all, when you have once learned the uſe of prayer, you will find, that as

"That

"That which yields or fills
All Space, the ambient Air, wide interfus'd
Embraces round this florid Earth:"

ſo will this, till through every ſpace of life it be interfuſed with all your employments, and wherever you are, whatever you do, embrace you on every ſide. Then you will be able to ſay boldly,

"With me no melancholy void,
No moment lingers unemploy'd,
Or unimprov'd below;
My wearineſs of life is gone,
Who live to ſerve my God alone,
And only Jeſus know."

VI. One point only remains to be conſidered; that is, the Uſe of Money. What is the way wherein the generality of Chriſtians employ this? And is there not a more excellent way?

1. The generality of Chriſtians uſually ſet apart ſomething yearly, perhaps a tenth or even one-eighth part of their income, whether it ariſe from yearly revenue, or from trade, for charitable uſes. A few I have known who ſaid like *Zaccheus*, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." O that it would pleaſe God to multiply thoſe friends of mankind, thoſe general benefactors! But,

2. Beſides thoſe who have a ſtated rule, there are thouſands who give large ſums to the poor: eſpecially when any ſtriking inſtance of diſtreſs is repreſented to them in lively colours.

3. I praiſe God for all of you who act in this manner. May you never be weary of well-doing! May God reſtore what you give ſeven-fold into your own boſom! But yet I ſhew unto you a more excellent way.

4. You may conſider yourſelf as one, in whoſe hands the Proprietor of heaven and earth and all things therein, has lodged a part of his goods, to be diſpoſed of according to his direction. And his direction is, that you ſhould look upon yourſelf as one of a certain number of indigent perſons, who are to be provided for out of that portion of his goods, wherewith you are entruſted. You have two advantages over the reſt: the one, that "it is more bleſſed to give than to receive;" the other that you are to ſerve yourſelf firſt: and others afterwards. This is the light wherein you are to ſee yourſelf and them: but to be more particular, Firſt, if you have no family, after you have provided for yourſelf, give away all that remains: ſo that

"Each Chriſtmas your accounts may clear,
And wind your bottom round the year."

This was the practice of all the young men at *Oxford*, who were called *Methodiſts*. For example. One of them had thirty pounds a year. He lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty ſhillings. The next year receiving ſixty pounds, he ſtill lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away ſixty-two. The fourth year he received a hundred and twenty pounds. Still he lived as before on twenty-eight; and gave to the poor ninety-two. Was not this

a more

a more excellent way? Secondly, if you have a family ſeriouſly conſider before God, how much each member of it wants, in order to have what is needful for life and godlineſs. And in general, do not allow them leſs, nor much more than you allow yourſelf. Thirdly, this being done, fix your purpoſe, to "Gain no more." I charge you in the name of God, do not increaſe your ſubſtance! As it comes daily or yearly, ſo let it go: otherwiſe you "lay up treaſures upon earth." And this our Lord as flatly forbids, as murder and adultery. By doing it therefore you would "treaſure up to yourſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

5. But ſuppoſe it were not forbidden, how can you on principles of reaſon, ſpend your money in a way, which God may *poſſibly forgive*, inſtead of ſpending it in a manner which he will *certainly reward?* You will have no reward in heaven, for what you *lay up:* you will for what you *lay out:* every pound you put into the earthly Bank is ſunk: it brings no intereſt above. But every pound you give to the poor, is put into the Bank of heaven. And it will bring glorious intereſt: yea, and ſuch as will be accumulating to all eternity.

6. Who then is a wiſe man, and endued with knowledge among you! Let him reſolve this day, this hour, this moment, the Lord aſſiſting him, to chuſe in all the preceding particulars the *more excellent way:* and let him ſteadily keep it, both with regard to ſleep, prayer, work, food, converſation and diverſions: and particularly, with regard to the employment of that im-

portant *Talent*, *Money*. Let *your* heart anſwer to the call of God. "From this moment, God being my helper, I will lay up no more treaſure upon earth: this one thing I will do, I will lay up treaſure in heaven: I will render unto God the things that are God's: I will give him all my goods and all my heart."

SERMON

SERMON XCII.

An Israelite Indeed.

John i. 47.

Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

1. SOME years ago a very ingenious man, Profeſſor *Hutchinſon* of *Glaſgow*, publiſhed two treatiſes, on the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. In the latter of theſe he maintains, That the very Eſſence of Virtue is, The love of our fellow-creatures. He endeavours to prove, That Virtue and Benevolence are one and the ſame thing: that every temper is only ſo far virtuous, as it partakes of the nature of Benevolence: and that all our words and actions are then only virtuous, when they ſpring from the ſame principle. "But does he not ſuppoſe Gratitude, or the Love of God to be the foundation of this Benevolence?" By no means:

means: such a supposition as this never entered into his mind. Nay he supposes just the contrary: he does not make the least scruple to aver, That if any temper or action be produced, by any regard to God, or any view to a reward from him, it is not virtuous at all: and that if an action spring partly from benevolence, and partly from a view to God, the more there is in it of a view to God, the less there is of virtue.

2. I cannot see this beautiful essay of Mr. *Hutchinson's* in any other light, than as a decent, and therefore more dangerous attack upon the whole of the Christian Revelation: seeing this asserts the love of God to be the true foundation, both of the love of our neighbour and all other virtues: and accordingly places this as *the first and great commandment*, on which all the rest depend, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." So that according to the Bible, benevolence, or the love of our neighbour is only the second commandment. And suppose the Scripture be of God, it is so far from being true, that benevolence alone is both the foundation and the essence of all virtue, that benevolence itself is no virtue at all, unless it spring from the love of God.

3. Yet it cannot be denied, that this writer himself has a marginal note in favour of Christianity. "Who would not wish, says he, that the Christian Revelation could be proved to be of God? Seeing it is unquestionally the most benevolent institution that ever appeared in the world." But is not this, if it be considered thoroughly, another blow at the very root of that revelation? Is it more or less than to say, "I wish

"I wish it could; but in truth it cannot be proved."

4. Another ingenious writer advances a hypothesis totally different from this. Mr. *Wollaston*, in the book which he entitles "The Religion of Nature delineated," endeavours to prove, that "Truth is the Essence of Virtue," or conformableness to Truth. But it seems Mr. *Wollaston* goes farther from the Bible, than Mr. *Hutchinson* himself. For Mr. *Hutchinson's* scheme sets aside only one of the two great commandments, namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:" whereas Mr. *Wollaston* sets aside both: for his hypothesis does not place the essence of virtue, in either the love of God or of our neighbour.

5. However both of these authors agree, though in different ways, to put asunder what God has joined. But St. *Paul* unites them together in teaching us to "speak the truth in love." And undoubtedly both truth and love were united in him, to whom he who knows the hearts of all men, gives this amiable character, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

6. But who is it, concerning whom our blessed Lord gives this glorious testimony? Who is this *Nathanael*, of whom so remarkable an account is given in the latter part of the chapter before us? Is it not strange, that he is not mentioned again, in any part of the New Testament? He is not mentioned again under this name: but probably he had another, whereby he was more commonly called. It was generally believed by the ancients, that he is the same person who

who is elsewhere termed *Bartholomew*: one of our Lord's Apostles, and one that in the enumeration of them, both by St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* is placed immediately after St. *Philip*, who first brought him to his Master. It is very probable, that his proper name was *Nathanael*, a name common among the Jews: and that his other name, *Bartholomew*, meaning only the son of *Ptolemy*, was derived from his father, a custom which was then exceeding common among the Jews, as well as the Heathens.

7. By what little is said of him in the context, he appears to have been a man of an excellent spirit: not hasty of belief, and yet open to conviction, and willing to receive the truth from whencesoever it came. So we read (ver. 45.) "Philip findeth Nathanael, (probably by what we term accident) and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth. Nathanael saith unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Has Moses spoke, or did the Prophets write, of any Prophet to come from thence? "Philip saith unto him, Come and see," and thou wilt soon be able to judge for thyself. *Nathanael* took his advice, without staying to confer with flesh and blood. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming, and saith, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith, (doubtless with surprise enough,) Whence knowest thou me? Jesus saith, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and said unto him, (so soon was all prejudice gone!) Rabbi, thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!"

But

But what is implied in our Lord's character of him? "In whom is no guile?" It may include all that is contained in that advice,

"Still let thy heart be true to God!
Thy words to it, thy actions to them both."

I. 1. We may first observe, what is implied in having our hearts true to God? Does this imply any less than is included in that gracious command, "My son, give me thy heart?" Then only is our heart *true to God*, when we give it to him. We give him our heart in the lowest degree, when we *seek* our happiness in him: when we do not seek it in gratifying *the desire of the flesh*, in any of the pleasures of sense: nor in gratifying *the desire of the eye*, in any of the pleasures of the imagination, arising from grand, or new, or beautiful objects, whether of nature or art. Neither in *the pride of life*, in *the honour that cometh of men*, in being beloved, esteemed and applauded by them: no nor yet in what some term, with equal impudence and ignorance, *the main chance*, the *laying up treasures on earth*. When we seek happiness in none of these, but in God alone, then we in some sense give him our heart.

2. But in a more proper sense we give God our heart, when we not only seek, but find happiness in him. This happiness undoubtedly begins, when we begin to know him by the teaching of his own Spirit: when it pleases the Father to reveal his Son in our heart, so that we can humbly say, "My Lord and my God:" and when the Son is pleased to reveal his Father in us, by "the Spirit of adoption crying in our hearts, Abba Father," and bearing his "testi-

timony

timony to our ſpirits that we are the children of God." Then it is that "the love of God *alſo* is ſhed abroad in our hearts." And according to the degree of our love, is the degree of our happineſs.

3. But it has been queſtioned, Whether it is the deſign of God, that the happineſs which is at firſt enjoyed, by all that know and love him, ſhould continue any longer than, as it were, the day of their eſpouſals? In very many, we muſt allow it does not: but in a few months, perhaps weeks or even days, the joy and peace either vaniſhes at once, or gradually decays. Now if God is willing that their happineſs ſhould continue, how is this to be accounted for?

4. I believe, very eaſily: St. *Jude's* exhortation, "Keep yourſelves in the love of God," certainly implies, that ſomething is to be done on our part, in order to its continuance. And is not this agreeable to that declaration of our Lord, concerning this and every gift of God, "Unto him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundantly: but from him that hath not," that is, uſes it not, improves it not, "ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath?" Luke viii. 18.

5. Indeed part of this verſe is tranſlated in our verſion, *That which he* ſeemeth to have. But it is difficult to make ſenſe of this. For if he only *ſeemeth* to have this, or any other gift of God, he really hath it not. And if ſo it cannot be taken away: for no man can loſe what he never had. It is plain therefore ὁ δοκεῖ ἔχειν, ought to be rendered *what he aſſuredly hath*. And it may be obſerved, that the word δοκέω, in various places of the New Teſtament, does not leſſen, but ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen the ſenſe of the word joined with it. Accordingly whoever improves the grace he has already received, whoever increaſes in the love of God, will ſurely retain it. God will continue, yea, will give it more abundantly: whereas whoever does not improve this talent, cannot poſſibly retain it. Notwithſtanding all he can do, it will infallibly be taken away from him.

II. 1. Mean time as the heart of him that is *an Iſraelite indeed* is true to God, ſo his words are ſuitable thereto. And there is no guile lodged in his heart, ſo there is none *found in his lips*. The firſt thing implied herein is *Veracity*, the ſpeaking the truth from his heart: the putting away all wilful lying, in every kind and degree. A lie, according to a well-known definition of it is, *Falſum teſtimonium cum intentione fallendi*: a falſehood known to be ſuch by the ſpeaker, and uttered with an intention to deceive. But even the ſpeaking a falſehood is not a lie, if it be not ſpoken with an intent to deceive.

2. Moſt Caſuiſts, particularly thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, diſtinguiſh lies into three ſorts: the firſt ſort is malicious lies; the ſecond, harmleſs lies; the third, officious lies. Concerning which they paſs a very different judgment. I know not any that are ſo hardy as even to excuſe, much leſs defend *malicious* lies: that is, ſuch as are told with a deſign to hurt any one: theſe are condemned by all parties. Men are more divided in their judgment, with regard to *harmleſs* lies, ſuch as are ſuppoſed to do neither good nor harm. The generality of men, even in the

Christian world, utter them without any scruple, and openly maintain, that if they do no harm to any one else, they do none to the speaker. Whether they do or no, they have certainly no place in the mouth of him that is *an Israelite indeed*. He cannot tell lies in jest, any more than in earnest; nothing but truth is heard from his mouth. He remembers the express command of God to the *Ephesian* Christians: "Putting away *all lying*, speak every man truth to his neighbour," Eph. iv. 15.

3. Concerning *officious* lies, those that are spoken with a design to do good, there have been numerous controversies in the Christian Church. Abundance of writers, and those men of renown for piety, as well as learning, have published whole volumes upon the subject, and in despite of all opposers, not only maintained them to be innocent, but commended them as meritorious. But what saith the Scripture? One passage is so express, that there does not need any other. It occurs in the third chapter of the epistle to the *Romans*, where the very words of the Apostle are (ver. 7, 8.) "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why am I yet judged as a sinner? (Will not that lie be excused from blame, for the good effect of it?) And not rather, as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come? Whose damnation is just." Here the Apostle plainly declares, 1. That the good effect of a lie, is no excuse for it. 2. That it is a mere slander upon Christians to say, "They teach men to do evil that good may come." 3. That if any in fact do this, either teach

teach men to do evil that good may come, or do ſo themſelves, their damnation is juſt. This is peculiarly applicable to thoſe who tell lies, in order to do good thereby. It follows, That officious lies as well as all others, are an abomination to the God of truth. Therefore there is no abſurdity, however ſtrange it may ſound, in that ſaying of the ancient Father, "I would not tell a wilful lie, to ſave the ſouls of the whole world."

4. The ſecond thing which is implied in the character of *an Iſraelite indeed* is *ſincerity*. As veracity is oppoſite to lying, ſo ſincerity is to cunning. But it is not oppoſite to wiſdom or diſcretion, which are well conſiſtent with it. "But what is the difference between wiſdom and cunning? Are they not almoſt, if not quite the ſame thing?" By no means. The difference between them is exceeding great. Wiſdom is the faculty of diſcerning the beſt ends, and the fitteſt means of attaining them. The end of every rational creature is God: the enjoying him in time and in eternity. The beſt, indeed the only means of attaining this end, is, "The faith that worketh by love." True *prudence* in the general ſenſe of the word, is the ſame thing with wiſdom. *Diſcretion* is but another name for prudence: if it be not rather a part of it: as it ſometimes is referred to our outward behaviour, and means, the ordering our words and actions right. On the contrary, cunning (ſo it is uſually termed amongſt common men, but policy among the great) is in plain terms, neither better nor worſe than the art of deceiving. If therefore it be any wiſdom at all, it is *the wiſdom from beneath*:

ſpringing from the bottomleſs pit, and leading down to the place from whence it came.

5. The two great means which cunning uſes in order to deceive are *ſimulation* and *diſſimulation*. Simulation is, the ſeeming to be what we are not: diſſimulation, the ſeeming not to be what we are: according to the old verſe, *Quod non eſt, ſimulo; diſſimulque quod eſt.* Both the one and the other we commonly term, the hanging out of falſe colours. Innumerable are the ſhapes that ſimulation puts on, in order to deceive. And almoſt as many are uſed by diſſimulation for the ſame purpoſe. But the man of ſincerity ſhuns them, and always appears exactly what he is.

6. "But ſuppoſe we are engaged with artful men, may we not uſe ſilence or reſerve, eſpecially if they aſk inſidious queſtions, without falling under the imputation of cunning?" Undoubtedly we may; nay, we ought on many occaſions, either wholly to keep ſilence, or to ſpeak with more or leſs reſerve as circumſtances may require. To ſay nothing at all is in many caſes, conſiſtent with the higheſt ſincerity. And ſo it is, to ſpeak with reſerve, to ſay only a part, perhaps a ſmall part of what we know. But were we to pretend it to be the whole, this would be contrary to ſincerity.

7. A more difficult queſtion than this is, May we not ſpeak the truth in order to deceive? I like him of old, who broke out into that exclamation, applauding his own ingenuity, "*Hoc ego mihi puto palmarium, ut vera dicendo eos amborſallam.*" This I take to be my maſter-piece to deceive them both, by ſpeaking the truth. I anſwer, A Heathen might pique himſelf upon

upon this; but a Chriſtian could not. For although this is not contrary to veracity, yet it certainly is to ſincerity. It is therefore the moſt excellent way if we judge it proper to ſpeak at all, to put away both ſimulation and diſſimulation, and to ſpeak the naked truth from our heart.

8. Perhaps this is properly termed *ſimplicity*. It goes a little farther than ſincerity itſelf. It implies not only, firſt, The ſpeaking no known falſehood, and ſecondly, The not deſignedly deceiving any one; but thirdly, The ſpeaking plainly and artleſsly to every one when we ſpeak at all: the ſpeaking as little children, in a child-like, though not a childiſh manner. Does not this utterly exclude the uſing any *compliments*? A vile word, the very ſound of which I abhor: quite agreeing with our Poet,

"It never was good day
Since lowly fawning was called compliment."

I adviſe men of ſincerity and ſimplicity never to take that filly word into their mouth; but labour to keep at the utmoſt diſtance, both from the name and the thing.

9. Not long before that remarkable time,

"When Statesmen ſent a Prelate croſs the ſeas,
By long-fam'd act of Pains and Penalties,"

ſeveral Biſhops attacked Biſhop *Atterbury* at once, then Biſhop of *Rochester*, and aſked, "My Lord, why will you not ſuffer your ſervants to deny you, when you do not care to ſee company? It is not a lie for them to ſay, Your Lordſhip is not

at home. For it deceives no one. Every one knows it means only, Your Lordship is busy." He replied, "My Lords, if it is (which I doubt) consistent with sincerity, yet I am sure it is not consistent with that simplicity which becomes a Christian Bishop."

10. But to return. The sincerity and simplicity of him in whom is no guile, have likewise an influence on his whole behaviour; they give a colour to his whole outward conversation; which though it be far removed from every thing of clownishness, and ill breeding, of roughness and surliness, yet is plain and artless, and free from all disguise, being the very picture of his heart. The truth and love which continually reign there, produce an open front, and a serene countenance. Such as leave no pretence to say, with that arrogant King of *Castile*, "When God made man, he left one capital defect: he ought to have set a window in his breast;" for he opens a window in his own breast, by the whole tenor of his words and and actions.

11. This then is real, genuine, solid virtue. Not truth alone, nor conformity to truth. This is a property of real virtue: not the essence of it. Not love alone: though this comes nearer the mark; for *love* in one sense *is the fulfilling of the law*. No: truth and love united together are the essence of virtue or holiness. God indispensably requires "truth in the inward parts," influencing all our words and actions. Yet truth itself separate from love, is nothing in his sight. But let the humble, gentle, patient love of all mankind, be fixed on its right foundation, namely, the love of God springing

ſpringing up from faith, from a full conviction that God hath given his only Son to die for *my* ſins: and then the whole will reſolve into that grand concluſion, "worthy of all men to be received, Neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith that worketh by love."

SERMON

SERMON XCIII.

ON CHARITY.

1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so as to remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing.
And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

WE know, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God*, and is therefore true and right concerning all things. But we know likewise, that there are some scriptures which more immediately commend themselves to every man's conscience. In this rank we may place the passage

paſſage before us: there are ſcarce any that object to it. On the contrary, the generality of men very readily appeal to it. Nothing is more common than to find even thoſe who deny the authority of the holy ſcriptures, yet affirming, "This is my religion: that which is deſcribed in the thirteenth chapter of the Corinthians." Nay, even a Jew, Dr. *Nunes* a *Spaniſh* Phyſician, then ſettled at *Savannah*, in *Georgia*, uſed to ſay, with great earneſtneſs, "*That Paul* of *Tarſus*, was one of the fineſt writers I have ever read. I wiſh the thirteenth chapter of his firſt letter to the *Corinthians*, were wrote in letters of gold. And I wiſh every Jew were to carry it with him wherever he went." He judged, (and herein he certainly judged right) that this ſingle chapter contained the whole of true religion. It contains "whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely: if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe," it is all contained in this.

In order to ſee this in the cleareſt light, we may conſider,

Firſt, what the charity here ſpoken of is?

Secondly, What thoſe things are which are uſually put in the place of it? We may then,

Thirdly, Obſerve, that neither of them, nor all of them put together can ſupply the want of it.

I. 1. We are, firſt, to conſider, What this Charity is? What is the nature, and what are the properties of it?

St. *Paul's* word is Ἀγάπη exactly anſwering to the plain Engliſh word *love*. And accordingly it is

is so rendered in all the old translations of the Bible. So it stood in *William Tindal's* Bible, which I suppose was the first English translation of the whole Bible. So it was also in the Bible published by the authority of King *Henry* the Eighth: so it was likewise in all the editions of the Bible that were successively published in *England* during the reign of King *Edward* the Sixth, Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James* the First. Nay, so it is found in the Bibles of King *Charles* the First's reign: I believe, to the period of it. The first Bibles I have seen wherein the word was changed, were those printed by *Roger Daniel*, and *John Field*, Printers to the Parliament, in the year 1649. Hence it seems probable that the alteration was made during the sitting of the Long Parliament: probably it was then that the Latin word Charity was put in the place of the *English* word *Love*. It was in an unhappy hour this alteration was made; the ill effects of it remain to this day: and these may be observed not only among the poor and illiterate: not only thousands of common men and women, no more understand the word Charity, than they do the original Greek; but the same miserable mistake has diffused itself among men of education and learning. Thousands of these are misled thereby, and imagine that the Charity treated of in this chapter refers chiefly, if not wholly, to outward actions, and to mean little more than almsgiving! I have heard many Sermons preached upon this chapter: particularly before the University of *Oxford*. And I never heard more than one, wherein the meaning of it was not totally misrepresented. But had the old and proper

proper word *Love*, been retained, there would have been no room for misrepresentation.

2. But what kind of love is that whereof the Apostle is speaking throughout the chapter? Many persons of eminent learning and piety, apprehend that it is the love of God. But from reading the whole chapter numberless times, and considering it in every light, I am thoroughly persuaded that what St. *Paul* is here directly speaking of, is the love of our neighbour. I believe whoever carefully weighs the whole tenor of his discourse, will be fully convinced of this. But it must be allowed to be such a love of our neighbour, as can only spring from the love of God. And whence does this love of God flow? Only from that faith which is of the operation of God: which whoever has, has a direct evidence, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." When this is particularly applied to his heart, so that he can say, with humble boldness, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me:" then, and not till then, "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart." And this love sweetly constrains him to love every child of man with the love which is here spoken of: not with the love of esteem or of complaisance; for this can have no place, with regard to those, who are (if not his personal enemies, yet) enemies to God and their own souls; but with a love of benevolence, of tender good-will to all the souls that God has made.

3. But it may be asked, "If there be no true love of our neighbour, but that which springs from the love of God; and if the love of God flows from no other fountain than faith in the Son

Son of God: does it not follow that the whole heathen world is excluded from all possibility of salvation? Seeing they are cut off from faith: for faith cometh by hearing. And how shall they hear without a Preacher? I answer, St. *Paul's* words, spoken on another occasion, are applicable to this, "What the law speaketh, it speaketh to them that are under the law." Accordingly that sentence, "He that believeth not shall be damned," is spoken of them to whom the Gospel is preached. Others it does not concern: and we are not required to determine any thing touching their final state. How it will please God, the Judge of all, to deal with *them*, we may leave to God himself. But this we know, that he is not the God of the Christians only, but the God of the Heathens also: that he is "rich in mercy to all that call upon him, according to the light they have: and that in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him."

4. But to return This is the *nature* of that *Love*, whereof the Apostle is here speaking. But what are the properties of it, the fruits which are inseparable from it? The Apostle reckons up many of them; but the principal of them are these,

First, *Love is not puffed up*. As is the measure of love, so is the measure of humility. Nothing humbles the soul so deeply as love: it casts out all "high conceits, engendering pride," all arrogance and over-weening, makes us little, and poor, and base, and vile in our own eyes. It abases us both before God and man; makes us willing to be the least of all, and the servants of all

all, and teaches us to say, "A mote in the sunbeam is little, but I am infinitely less in the presence of God."

5. Secondly, *Love is not provoked.* Our present *English* translation renders it, *is not easily provoked.* But how did the word *easily* come in? There is not a tittle of it in the text: the words of the Apostle are simply these, οὐ παροξύνεται. Is it not probable, it was inserted by the translators with a design to excuse St. *Paul*, for fear his practice should appear to contradict his doctrine? For we read, *Acts* xv. ver. 36, and seq. "And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city, where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them, John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good, to take with them, one who departed from the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus: and Paul chose Silas and departed; being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches."

6. Would not any one think on reading these words, that they were both equally sharp? That *Paul* was just as hot as *Barnabas*, and as much wanting in love as he? But the text says no such thing, as will be plain, if we consider first the occasion. When St. *Paul* proposed, that they should "again visit the brethren in every city, where they had preached the word," so far they were agreed. "And Barnabas determined to take with him John," because he was his sis-

ter's son, without receiving or asking St. *Paul's* advice. "But Paul thought not good to take him with them who had departed from them from Pamphylia, (whether through sloth or cowardice) and went not with them to the work." And undoubtedly he thought right: he had reason on his side. The following words are καὶ ἐγένετο παροξυσμός; literally, "And there was a fit of anger," It does not say, in St. *Paul*, probably it was in *Barnabas* alone, who thus supplied the want of reason with passion; "so that they parted asunder. And Barnabas" resolved to have his own way, did as his nephew had done before, "departed from the work, took Mark with him, *and* sailed to Cyprus." But *Paul* went on his work, "being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God: (which *Barnabas* seems not to have staid for.) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches." From the whole account, it does not appear that St. *Paul* was in any fault: that he either felt any temper, or spoke any word, contrary to the law of love. Therefore not being in any fault, he does not need any excuse.

7. Certainly he who is full of love is "gentle towards all men." He "in meekness instructs those that oppose themselves;" that oppose what he loves most, even the truth of God, or that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord: not knowing but "God peradventure may bring them to the knowledge of the truth." However provoked, he does "not return evil for evil, or railing for railing." Yea, he "blesses those that curse him, and does good to them that despitefully use him and persecute him." He "is

not

not overcome of evil, but *always* overcomes evil with good."

8. Thirdly, *Love is long-suffering.* It *endures* not a few affronts, reproaches, injuries: but *all things* which God is pleased to permit either men or devils to inflict. It arms the soul with invincible patience: not harsh stoical patience, but yielding as the air, which making no resistance to the stroke, receives no harm thereby. The lover of mankind remembers him who suffered for us, "leaving us an example that we might tread in his steps." Accordingly if his "enemy hunger, he feeds him," if he thirst, he "gives him drink;" and by so doing, he heaps coals of fire, of melting love, upon his head. "And many waters cannot quench *this* love: neither can *even* the floods of *ingratitude* drown it."

II. 1. We are, secondly, to enquire, What those things are, which it is commonly supposed will supply the place of love. And the first of these is eloquence: a faculty of talking well, particularly on religious subjects. Men are generally inclined to think well of one that talks well. If he speaks properly and fluently of God, and the things of God, who can doubt of his being in God's favour? And it is very natural for him, to think well of himself, to have as favourable an opinion of himself as others have.

2. But men of reflection are not satisfied with this: they are not content with a flood of words, they prefer thinking before talking, and judge, one that knows much is far preferable to one that talks much. And it is certain, knowledge is an excellent gift of God; particularly knowledge of

the Holy Scriptures, in which are contained all the depths of divine knowledge and wisdom. Hence it is generally thought that a man of much knowledge, knowledge of scripture in particular, must not only be in the favour of God, but likewise enjoy a high degree of it.

3. But men of deeper reflection are apt to say, "I lay no stress upon any other knowledge, but the knowledge of God by faith. Faith is the only knowledge, which in the sight of God is of great price. *We are saved by faith*; by faith alone: this is the one thing needful. He that believeth, and he alone, shall be saved everlastingly." There is much truth in this: it is unquestionably true, that "we are saved by faith:" consequently, That "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned."

4. But some men will say, with the Apostle *James*, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, (if thou canst; but indeed it is impossible) and I will shew thee my faith by my works." And many are induced to think that good works, works of piety and mercy, are of far more consequence than faith itself, and will supply the want of every other qualification for heaven. Indeed this seems to be the general sentiment, not only of the members of the Church of *Rome*, but of Protestants also; not of the giddy and thoughtless, but the serious members of our own Church.

5. And this cannot be denied, our Lord himself hath said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits:" by their works ye know them that believe, and them that believe not. But yet it may be doubted, whether there is not a surer proof

proof of the ſincerity of our faith, than even our works: that is, our willingly ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake: eſpecially, if after ſuffering reproach, and pain, and loſs of friends and ſubſtance, a man gives up life itſelf, yea, by a ſhameful and painful death, by giving his body to be burned, rather than he would give up faith and a good conſcience, by neglecting his known duty.

6. It is proper to obſerve here, firſt, What a beautiful gradation there is, each ſtep riſing above the other, in the enumeration of thoſe ſeveral things, which ſome or other of thoſe that are called Chriſtians, and are uſually accounted ſo, really believe will ſupply the abſence of love. St. *Paul* begins at the loweſt point, *talking well*, and advances ſtep by ſtep, every one riſing higher than the preceding, till he comes to the higheſt of all. A ſtep above eloquence is knowledge: faith is a ſtep above this. Good-works are a ſtep above that faith. And even above this, is ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake. Nothing is higher than this but Chriſtian love: the love of our neighbour flowing from the love of God.

7. It may be proper to obſerve, ſecondly, That whatever paſſes for religion in any part of the Chriſtian world, (whether it be a part of religion, or no part at all, but either folly, ſuperſtition or wickedneſs) may with very little difficulty be reduced to one or other of theſe heads. Every thing which is ſuppoſed to be religion, either by Proteſtants or Romaniſts, and is not, is contained under one or another of theſe five particulars. Make trial, as often as you pleaſe, with any thing that is called religion, but improperly

perly so called, and you will find the rule to hold without any exception.

III. 1. I am now in the third place to demonstrate, to all who have ears to hear, who do not harden themselves against conviction, that neither any one of these five qualifications, nor all of them together, will avail any thing before God, without the love above described.

In order to do this in the clearest manner, we may consider them one by one. And first, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels:" with an eloquence such as never was found in men, concerning the nature, attributes, and works of God, whether of creation or providence: though I were not herein a whit behind the chief of the Apostles, preaching like St. *Peter*, and praying like St. *John*; yet unless humble, gentle, patient love be the ruling temper of my soul, I *am* no better in the judgment of God, "than sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The highest eloquence therefore either in private conversation, or in publick ministrations; the brightest talents either of preaching or prayer, if they were not joined with humble, meek, and patient resignation, might sink me the deeper into hell, but will not bring me one step nearer heaven.

2. A plain instance may illustrate this. I knew a young man between fifty and sixty years ago, who during the course of several years, never endeavoured to convince any one of a religious truth, but he *was* convinced: and he never endeavoured to persuade any one to engage in a religious practice, but he was persuaded; what then? All that power of convincing speech, all

all that force of perſuaſion, if it was not joined with meekneſs and lowlineſs, with reſignation and patient love, would no more qualify him for the fruition of God, than a clear voice, or a fine complexion. Nay, it would rather procure him a hotter place in everlaſting burnings.

3. Secondly, "Though I have the gift of prophecy," of foretelling thoſe future events which no creature can foreſee; and "though I underſtand all *the* myſteries" of nature, of providence, and the word of God: and *have all knowledge* of things divine or human, that any mortal ever attained to: though I can explain the moſt myſterious paſſages of *Daniel*, of *Ezekiel* and *the Revelation:* yet if I have not humility, gentleneſs and reſignation, I *am nothing* in the ſight of God.

A little before the concluſion of the late war in *Flanders*, one who came from thence gave us a very ſtrange relation. I knew not what judgment to form of this; but waited till *John Haime* ſhould come over, of whoſe veracity I could no more doubt, than of his underſtanding. The account he gave was this. "*Jonathan Pyrah* was a member of our Society in *Flanders*. I knew him ſome years, and knew him to be a man of an unblameable character. One day he was ſummoned to appear before the Board of General Officers. One of them ſaid, What is this which we hear of you? We hear you are turned prophet, and that you foretel the downfal of the bloody Houſe of *Bourbon*, and the haughty Houſe of *Auſtria*. We ſhould be glad if you were a real prophet, and if your prophecies came true. But what ſign do you give, to convince us you are ſo? and that your predictions will come

come to paſs? He readily anſwered, "Gentlemen, I give you a ſign. To-morrow at twelve o'clock, you ſhall have ſuch a ſtorm of thunder and lightning, as you never had before ſince you came into *Flanders*. I give you a ſecond ſign: as little as any of you expect any ſuch thing, as little appearance of it as there is now, you ſhall have a general engagement with the *French* within three days. I give you a third ſign: I ſhall be ordered to advance in the firſt line. If I am a falſe prophet, I ſhall be ſhot dead at the firſt diſcharge. But if I am a true prophet I ſhall only receive a muſket-ball in the calf of my left leg. At twelve the next day there was ſuch thunder and lightning as they never had before in *Flanders*. On the third day, contrary to all expectation, was the general battle of *Fontenoy*. He was ordered to advance in the firſt line. And at the very firſt diſcharge, he did receive a muſket ball in the calf of his left leg."

4. And yet all this profited him nothing, either for temporal or eternal happineſs. When the war was over, he returned to *England*; but the ſtory was got before him: in conſequence of which he was ſent for by the Counteſs of *St——s*, and ſeveral other perſons of quality, who were deſirous to receive ſo ſurprizing an account from his own mouth. He could not bear ſo much honour. It quite turned his brain. In a little time he ran ſtark mad. And ſo he continues to this day, living ſtill, as I apprehend, on *Wakefield Mooreſide*, within a few miles of *Leeds*.*

5. And what would it profit a man to *have all knowledge*, even that which is infinitely preferable to all other, the knowledge of the Holy Scripture?

* At the time of writing this Sermon. He is ſince dead.

ture? I knew a young man about twenty years ago, who was so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, that if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek word in the New Testament, he would tell, after a little pause, not only how often the one or the other occured in the Bible, but also what it meant in every place. His name was * *Thomas Walsh*. Such a master of Biblic knowledge I never saw before, and never expect to see again. Yet if with all his knowledge he had been void of love, if he had been proud, passionate or impatient, he and all his knowledge would have perished together, as sure as ever he was born.

6. "And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains."—The faith which is able to do this, cannot be the fruit of vain imagination, a mere madman's dream, a system of opinions; but must be a real work of God. Otherwise it could not have such an effect. Yet if this faith does not work by love, if it does not produce universal holiness, if it does not bring forth lowliness, meekness and resignation, it will profit me nothing. This is as certain a truth as any that is delivered in the whole oracles of God. All faith that is, that ever was, or ever can be, separate from tender benevolence to every child of man, friend or foe, Christian, Jew, Heretic, or Pagan; separate from gentleness to all men; separate from resignation in all events, and contentedness in all conditions: is not the faith of a Christian, and will stand us in no stead before the face of God.

7. Hear ye this, All you that are called Methodists. You of all men living are most concerned herein.

* His Journal, written by himself, is extant.

herein. You constantly speak of salvation by faith: and you are in the right for so doing. You maintain, one and all, that a man is justified by faith, without giving up the Bible, and betraying your own souls. You insist upon it, that we are saved by faith; and undoubtedly so we are. But consider mean time, that let us have ever so much faith, and be our faith ever so strong, it will never save us from hell, unless it now save us from all unholy tempers; from pride, passion, impatience: from all arrogance of spirit, all haughtiness and overbearing: from wrath, anger, bitterness: from discontent, murmuring, fretfulness, peevishness. We are of all men most inexcusable, if having been so frequently guarded against that strong delusion, we still, while we indulge any of these tempers, bless ourselves and dream we are in the way to heaven!

7. Fourthly, "Although I give all my goods to the poor," though I divide all my real, and all my personal estate into small portions, (so the original word properly signifies) and diligently bestow it on those who I have reason to believe are the most proper objects: yet if I am proud, passionate, or discontented; if I give way to any of these tempers; whatever good I may do to others, I do none to my own soul. O how pitiable a case is this! Who would not grieve, that these beneficent men should lose all their labour! It is true, many of them have a reward in this world, if not before, yet after their death. They have costly and pompous funerals. They have marble monuments of the most exquisite workmanship. They have epitaphs, wrote in the most elegant strain, which extol their virtues

to

to the skies. Perhaps they have yearly orations spoken over them, to transmit their memory to all generations. So have many founders of religious Houses, of Colleges, Alms-houses and most charitable institutions. And this is an allowed rule, that none can exceed in the praise of the founder of his House, College or Hospital. But still what a poor reward is this! Will it add to their comfort or to their misery, suppose (which must be the case if they did not die in faith) that they are in the hands of the devil and his angels! What insults, what cutting reproaches would these occasion, from their infernal companions! O that they were wise! That all those who are zealous of good works, would put them in their proper place! Would not imagine, they can supply the want of holy tempers; but take care, that they may spring from them!

8. How exceeding strange must this sound in the ears of most of those who are, by the courtesy of *England*, called Christians! But stranger still is that assertion of the Apostle, which comes in the last place: "Although I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Although, rather than deny the faith, rather than commit a known sin, or omit a known duty, I voluntarily submit to a cruel death, "deliver up my body to be burned:" yet if I am under the power of pride, or anger, or fretfulness, "it profiteth me nothing."

10, Perhaps this may be illustrated by an example. We have a remarkable account in the Tracts of Dr. *Geddes* (a Civilian) who was Envoy from Queen *Ann* to the Court of *Portugal*, in the latter end of her reign. He was present at one of those *Auto de fes*, (Acts of Faith) wherein the

the Roman Inquifitors burned Heretics alive. One of the perfons who was then brought out for execution, having been confined in the dungeons of the Inquifition, had not feen the fun for many years. It proved a bright, fun-fhiny day. Looking up, he cried out in furprife, "O how can any one who fees that glorious luminary, worfhip any but the God that made it!" A Friar ftanding by, ordered them to run an iron gag through his lips, that he might fpeak no more. Now what did that poor man feel within when this order was executed? If he faid in his heart, though he could not utter it with his lips, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," undoubtedly the angels of God were ready to carry his foul into Abraham's bofom. But if inftead of this, he cherifhed the refentment in his heart, which he could not expref with his tongue, although his body was confumed by the flames, I will not fay his foul went to paradife.

11. The fum of all that has been obferved is this. Whatever I fpeak, whatever I know, whatever I believe, whatever I do, whatever I fuffer: if I have not the faith that worketh by love, that produces love to God and all mankind, I am not in the narrow way which leadeth to life; but in the broad road that leadeth to deftruction. In other words: whatever eloquence I have, whether natural or fupernatural knowledge; whatever faith I have received from God; whatever works I do, whether of piety or mercy: whatever fufferings I undergo for confcience fake, even though I refift unto blood: all thefe things put together, however applauded of men, will avail nothing before God, unlefs I am meek and

and lowly in heart, and can say in all things, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

12. We conclude from the whole, (and it can never be too much inculcated, because all the world votes on the other side,) That true religion, in the very essence of it, is nothing short of *holy tempers*. Consequently all other religion, whatever name it bears, whether Pagan, Mahometan, Jewish or Christian: and whether Popish or Protestant, Lutheran or Reformed, without these is lighter than vanity itself.

13. Let every man therefore that has a soul to be saved, see that he secure this one point. With all his eloquence, his knowledge, his faith, works, and sufferings, let him hold fast this *one thing needful*. He that through the power of faith, endureth to the end in humble, gentle, patient love; he and he alone shall, through the merits of Christ, "inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world."

SERMON XCIV.

ON ZEAL.

GALATIANS iv. 18.

It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing.

1. THERE are few subjects in the whole compass of religion, that are of greater importance than this. For without Zeal it is impossible, either to make any considerable progress in religion ourselves, or to do any considerable service to our neighbour, whether in temporal or spiritual things. And yet nothing has done more disservice to religion, or more mischief to mankind than a sort of Zeal, which has for several ages prevailed, both in Pagan, Mahometan, and Christian nations. Insomuch that it may truly be said, pride, covetousness, ambition, revenge, have in all parts of the world slain their thousands; but Zeal its ten thousands. Terrible instances of

of this have occurred in ancient times, in the moſt civilized Heathen nations. To this chiefly were owing the inhuman perſecutions of the primitive Chriſtians: and in later ages, the no leſs inhuman perſecutions of the Proteſtants, by the Church of *Rome*. It was zeal that kindled fires in our nation, during the reign of bloody Queen *Mary*. It was Zeal that ſoon after made ſo many provinces of *France* a field of blood. It was Zeal that murdered ſo many thouſand, unreſiſting Proteſtants, in the never to be forgotten maſſacre of *Paris*. It was Zeal that occaſioned the ſtill more horrid maſſacre in *Ireland*; the like whereof, both with regard to the number of the murdered, and the ſhocking circumſtances wherewith many of thoſe murders were perpetrated, I verily believe never occurred before, ſince the world began. As to the other parts of *Europe*, an eminent *German* Writer has taken immenſe pains, to ſearch both the records, in various places, and the moſt authentic hiſtories, in order to gain ſome competent knowledge of the blood which has been ſhed ſince the Reformation. And computes, that partly by private perſecution, partly by religious wars in the courſe of forty years, reckoning from the year 1520, above forty millions of perſons have been deſtroyed.

2. But is it not poſſible to diſtinguiſh right Zeal from wrong? Undoubtedly it is poſſible. But it is difficult: ſuch is the deceitfulneſs of the human heart! So ſkilfully do the paſſions juſtify themſelves! And there are exceeding few treatiſes on the ſubject; at leaſt in the *Engliſh* language. To this day I have ſeen, or heard of only one Sermon: and that was wrote above a hundred years ago, by Dr. *Sprat*, then Biſhop

of *Rochester*, so that it is now exceeding scarce.

3. I would gladly cast in my mite, By God's assistance, toward the clearing up this important question, in order to enable well-meaning men, who are desirous of pleasing God, to distinguish true Christian Zeal from its various counterfeits. And this is more necessary at this time than it has been for many years. Sixty years ago there seemed to be scarce any such thing as religious Zeal left in the nation. People in general were wonderfully cool and undisturbed about "that trifle, religion." But since then, it is easy to observe, there has been a very considerable alteration. Many thousands almost in every part of the nation, have felt a real desire to save their souls. And I am persuaded there is at this day more religious Zeal in *England*, than there has been for a century past.

4. But has this Zeal been of the right or the wrong kind? Probably both the one and the other. Let us see if we cannot separate these, that we may avoid the latter and cleave to the former. In order to this, I would first enquire, What is the nature of true, Christian Zeal: Secondly, What are the properties of it? And thirdly, draw some practical inferences.

I. And first, What is the nature of Zeal in general, and of true Christian Zeal in particular.

1. The original word, in its primary signification means *heat*, such as the heat of boiling water. When it is figuratively applied to the mind, it means any warm emotion or affection. Sometimes

Sometimes it is taken for *envy*. So we render it, Acts v. xvii. where we read, "the high-prieſt, and all that were with him, were filled with envy:" ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου· (although it might as well be rendered, were filled with *Zeal*.) Sometimes it is taken for anger and indignation; ſometimes for vehement deſire. And when any of our paſſions are ſtrongly moved on a religious account, whether for any thing good, or againſt any thing which we conceive to be evil, this we term, *religious Zeal*.

2. But it is not all that is called religious Zeal, which is worthy of that name. It is not properly religious or Chriſtian Zeal, if it be not joined with Charity. A fine Writer, (Biſhop *Spratt*,) carries the matter farther ſtill. "It has been affirmed, ſays that great man, No Zeal is right, which is not charitable, but is moſtly ſo. Charity or love is not only one ingredient, but the chief ingredient in its compoſition." May we not go further ſtill? May we not ſay that true Zeal is not moſtly charitable, but wholly ſo? That is, if we take charity in St. *Paul's* ſenſe, for love; the love of God and our neighbour. For it is a certain truth, (although little underſtood in the world,) that Chriſtian Zeal is all love. It is nothing elſe. The love of God and man fills up its whole nature.

3. Yet, it is not every degree of that love, to which this appellation is given. There may be ſome love, a ſmall degree of it where there is no Zeal. But it is properly, love in a higher degree. It is *fervent love*. True Chriſtian Zeal is no other than *the flame of love*. This is the nature, the inmoſt eſſence of it.

II. 1. From

II. 1. From hence it follows that the properties of Love, are the properties of Zeal alſo. Now one of the chief properties of Love, is *humility: Love is not puffed up.* Accordingly this is a property of true Zeal: humility is inſeparable from it. As is the degree of Zeal, ſuch is the degree of Humility: they muſt riſe and fall together. The ſame love which fills a man with zeal for God, makes him little, and poor, and vile in his own eyes.

2. Another of the properties of Love is *Meekneſs:* conſequently it is one of the properties of Zeal. It teaches us to be meek, as well as lowly: to be equally ſuperior to anger or pride. Like as the wax melteth at the fire, ſo before this ſacred flame, all turbulent paſſions melt away, and leave the ſoul unruffled and ſerene.

3. Yet another property of Love, and conſequently of Zeal, is unwearied *Patience;* for *Love endureth all things.* It arms the ſoul with entire reſignation to all the diſpoſals of divine providence, and teaches us to ſay in every occurrence, "It is the Lord: let him do what ſeemeth him good." It enables us, in whatever ſtation, therewith to be content: to repine at nothing; to murmur at nothing; "but in every thing to give thanks."

4. There is a fourth property of Chriſtian Zeal; which deſerves to be more particularly conſidered. This we learn from the very words of the Apoſtle, "It is good to be zealouſly affected, (not to have tranſient touches of zeal, but a ſteady, rooted diſpoſition) in a good thing:" in that which is good; for the proper object of Zeal, is good in general. That is, every thing that is good, really ſuch, in the ſight of God.

5. But

5. But what is good in the ſight of God? What is that religion, wherewith God is always well-pleaſed? How do the parts of this riſe one above another? And what is the comparative value of them?

This is a point exceeding little conſidered, and therefore little underſtood. Poſitive divinity, many have ſome knowledge of. But few know any thing of comparative divinity. I never ſaw but one tract wrote upon this head: a ſketch of which it may be of ſome uſe to ſubjoin.

In a Chriſtian believer, *Love* ſits upon the throne, which is erected in the inmoſt ſoul: namely, love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne, are all *holy tempers*; long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, meekneſs, fidelity, temperance: and if any other was compriſed in *the mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus*. In an exterior circle are all the *works of mercy*, whether to the ſouls or bodies of men. By theſe we exerciſe all holy tempers; by theſe we continually improve them, ſo that all theſe are real *means of grace*, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to theſe are thoſe that are uſually termed *works of piety*: reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord's ſupper, faſting or abſtinence. Laſtly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another, to love, holy tempers, and good works, our bleſſed Lord has united them together in one body, *the Church*, diſperſed all over the earth: a little emblem of which, of the Church univerſal, we have in every particular Chriſtian congregation.

6. This

6. This is that religion which our Lord has eſtabliſhed upon earth, ever ſince the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt. This is the entire, connected ſyſtem of Chriſtianity: and thus the ſeveral parts of it riſe one above another, from that loweſt point, *the aſſembling ourſelves together*, to the higheſt, love enthroned in the heart. And hence it is eaſy to learn the comparative value of every branch of religion. Hence alſo we learn a fifth property of true Zeal. That as it is always exerciſed ἐν καλῷ, *that which is good*, ſo it is always *proportioned* to that good, to the degree of goodneſs that is in its object.

7. For example. Every Chriſtian ought undoubtedly to be zealous for *the Church*, bearing a ſtrong affection to it, and earneſtly deſiring its proſperity and increaſe. He ought to be thus zealous, as for the Church univerſal, praying for it continually, ſo eſpecially for that particular Church or Chriſtian Society, whereof he himſelf is a member. For this he ought to wreſtle with God in prayer; mean time uſing every means in his power, to enlarge its borders, and to ſtrengthen his brethren, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

8. But he ſhould be more zealous for the *ordinances of Chriſt*, than for the Church itſelf: for prayer in public or private, for the Lord's Supper, for reading, hearing and meditating on his word; and for the much neglected duty of faſting. Theſe he ſhould earneſtly recommend, firſt by his example, and then by advice, by argument, perſuaſion, and exhortation, as often as occaſion offers.

9. Thus

9. Thus ſhould he ſhew his Zeal for works of piety; but much more for *works of mercy*. Seeing "God will have mercy and not ſacrifice;" that is, rather than ſacrifice. Whenever therefore one interferes with the other, works of mercy are to be preferred. Even reading, hearing prayer, are to be omitted, or to be poſtponed, "at charity's almighty call:" when we are called to relieve the diſtreſs of our neighbour, whether in body or ſoul.

10. But as zealous as we are for all good works, we ſhould be ſtill more zealous for *holy tempers:* for planting and promoting both in our own ſouls, and in all we have any intercourſe with, lowlineſs of mind, meekneſs, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering, contentedneſs, reſignation unto the will of God, deadneſs to the world and the things of the world, as the only means of being truly alive to God. For theſe proofs and fruits of living faith, we cannot be too zealous. We ſhould "talk of them as we ſit in our houſe, *and* when we walk by the way, *and* when we lie down, *and* when we riſe up." We ſhould make them continual matter of prayer; as being far more excellent than any outward works whatever: ſeeing thoſe will fail when the body drops off; but theſe will accompany us to eternity.

11. But our choiceſt Zeal ſhould be reſerved for *Love* itſelf, the end of the commandment, the fulfilling of the law. The Church, the ordinances, outward works of every kind, yea, all other holy tempers, are inferior to this, and riſe in value, only as they approach nearer and nearer to it. Here then is the great object of Chriſtian Zeal. Let every true believer in Chriſt, apply with all fervency of ſpirit, to the God

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that his heart may be more and more enlarged in love to God and to all mankind. This one thing let him do; let him "press on to this prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

III. It remains only, to draw some practical inferences from the preceding observations.

1. And first, if Zeal, true Christian Zeal, be nothing but the flame of love, then *hatred*, in every kind and degree, even every sort of *bitterness* toward them that oppose us, is so far from deserving the name of Zeal, that it is directly opposite to it. If Zeal, be only fervent love, then it stands at the utmost distance from *prejudice*, jealousy, evil-surmising; seeing *love thinketh no evil*. Then *bigotry* of every sort, and above all, the spirit of *persecution*, are totally inconsistent with it. Let not, therefore, any of these unholy tempers screen themselves under that sacred name. As all these are the works of the devil, let them appear in their own shape, and no longer under that specious disguise, deceive the unwary children of God.

2. Secondly. If lowliness be a property of Zeal, then pride is inconsistent with it. It is true, some degree of pride may remain, after the love of God is shed abroad in the heart: as this is one of the last evils that is rooted out, when God creates all things new. But it cannot reign, nor retain any considerable power, where fervent love is found. Yea, were we to give way to it but a little, it would damp that holy fervour; and if we did not immediately fly back to Christ, would utterly quench the Spirit.

3. Thirdly

3. Thirdly. If meekneſs be an inſeparable property of Zeal, what ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who call their anger by that name? Why, that they miſtake the truth totally; that they in the fulleſt ſenſe, put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs. We cannot be too watchful againſt this deluſion, becauſe it ſpreads over the whole Chriſtian world. Almoſt in all places, Zeal and anger paſs for equivalent terms: and exceeding few perſons are convinced, that there is any difference between them. How commonly do we hear it ſaid, "See how zealous the man is!" nay, he cannot be zealous: that is impoſſible; for he is in a paſſion. And paſſion is as inconſiſtent with Zeal, as light with darkneſs, or heaven with hell.

It were well that this point were thoroughly underſtood. Let us conſider it a little farther. We frequently obſerve one that bears the character of a religious man, vehemently angry at his neighbour. Perhaps he calls his brother, *Raca*, or *thou fool:* he brings a railing accuſation againſt him. You mildly admoniſh him of his warmth. He anſwers, it is my Zeal! No, it is your ſin; and unleſs you repent of it, will ſink you lower than the grave. There is much ſuch Zeal as this in the bottomleſs pit. Thence all Zeal of this kind comes. And thither it will go, and you with it, unleſs you are ſaved from it, before you go hence.

4. Fourthly. If patience, contentedneſs, and reſignation, are the properties of Zeal, then murmuring, fretfulneſs, diſcontent, impatience, are wholly inconſiſtent with it. And yet how ignorant are mankind of this? How often do we ſee men

men fretting at the ungodly, or telling you, They are "out of patience" with such or such things, and terming all this their Zeal! O spare no pains to undeceive them? If it be possible, shew them what Zeal is: and convince them that all murmuring, or fretting at sin, is a species of sin, and has no resemblance of, or connexion with, the true Zeal of the Gospel.

5. Fifthly. If the object of Zeal be *that which is good*, then fervor for any *evil thing*, is not Christian Zeal. I instance in *idolatry*, worshipping of angels, saints, images, the cross. Although therefore a man were so earnestly attached to any kind of idolatrous worship, that he would even "give his body to be burned," rather than refrain from it, call this bigotry or superstition if you please, but call it not Zeal: that is quite another thing.

From the same premises it follows, that fervor for *indifferent things*, is not Christian Zeal. But how exceedingly common is this mistake too? Indeed one would think, that men of understanding could not be capable of such weakness. But alas, the history of all ages proves the contrary. Who were men of stronger understandings than Bishop *Ridley*, and Bishop *Hooper*? And how warmly did these, and other great men of that age, dispute about the *Sacerdotal Vestments*? How eager was the contention for almost a hundred years, for and against wearing a *Surplice*? O shame to man! I would as soon have disputed about a straw, or a barley-corn! And this indeed, shall be called Zeal! And why was it not rather called wisdom, or holiness?

6. It

6. It follows alſo from the ſame premiſes, That fervor for *opinion* is not Chriſtian Zeal. But how few are ſenſible of this? And how innumerable are the miſchiefs, which even this ſpecies of falſe Zeal has occaſioned in the Chriſtian world? How many thouſand lives have been caſt away by thoſe who were zealous for the Romiſh opinions? How many of the excellent ones of the earth have been cut off, by zealots for the ſenſeleſs opinion of tranſubſtantiation? But does not every unprejudiced perſon ſee, that this Zeal is *earthly*, *ſenſual*, *deviliſh*? And that it ſtands, at the utmoſt contrariety to that Zeal, which is here recommended by the Apoſtle?

What an exceſs of charity is it then which our great Poet expreſſes, in his Poem on the Laſt Day? Where he talks of meeting in heaven,

"Thoſe who by mutual wounds expir'd,
By *Zeal* for their diſtinct perſuaſions fir'd?

Zeal indeed! What manner of zeal was this, which led them to cut one another's throats? Thoſe who were *fired* with this ſpirit, and died therein, will undoubtedly have their portion, not in heaven: (only love is there:) but in the *fire that never ſhall be quenched*.

7. Laſtly, If true Zeal be always proportioned to the degree of goodneſs which is in its object, then ſhould it riſe higher and higher according to the ſcale mentioned above; according to the comparative value of the ſeveral parts of religion. For inſtance; all that truly fear God ſhould be zealous for the *Church*: both for the catholic or

universal Church, and for that part of it whereof they are members. This is not the appointment of men, but of God. He saw, it was *not good for men to be alone*, even in this sense, but that the whole body of his children should be "knit together, and strengthened, by that which every joint supplieth." At the same time they should be more zealous for the *ordinances* of God; for public and private prayer, for hearing and reading the word of God, and for fasting, and the Lord's Supper. But they should be more zealous for *works* of mercy, than even for works of piety. Yet ought they to be more zealous still, for all *holy tempers*, lowliness, meekness, resignation: but most zealous of all, for that which is the sum and the perfection of religion, the *love* of God and man.

8. It remains only, to make a close and honest application of these things to our own souls. We all know the general truth, That "it is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing." Let us now, every one of us apply it to his own soul in particular.

9. Those indeed who are still dead in trespasses and sins, have neither part nor lot in this matter; nor those that live in any open sin, such as drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, or profane swearing. These have nothing to do with Zeal: they have no business at all even to take the word in their mouth. It is utter folly and impertinence for any to talk of Zeal for God, while he is doing the works of the devil. But if you have renounced the devil and all his works, and have settled it in your heart, I will "worship the Lord my God, and him only will I serve," then beware

beware of being neither cold nor hot: then be zealous for God! You may begin at the loweſt ſtep. Be zealous for *the Church*; more eſpecially, for that particular branch thereof, wherein your lot is caſt. Study the welfare of this, and carefully obſerve all the rules of it, for conſcience ſake. But in the mean time, take heed that you do not neglect any of the *ordinances* of God; for the ſake of which, in a great meaſure, the Church itſelf was conſtituted: ſo that it would be highly abſurd, to talk of Zeal for the Church, if you were not more zealous for them. But are you more zealous for *works of mercy*, than even for works of piety? Do *you* follow the example of your Lord, and prefer mercy even before ſacrifice? Do you uſe all diligence in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, viſiting them that are ſick and in priſon? And above all, do you uſe every means in your power, to ſave ſouls from death? If, as you have time, "you do good unto all men," though "eſpecially to them that are of the houſehold of faith," your Zeal for the Church is pleaſing to God: but if not, if you are not *careful to maintain good works*, what have you to do with the Church? If you have not *compaſſion on your fellow ſervants*, neither will your Lord have pity on *you*. *Bring no more vain oblations*. All your ſervice is *an abomination to the Lord*.

10. Are you better inſtructed than to put aſunder what God has joined? Than to ſeparate works of piety from works of mercy? Are you uniformly zealous of both? So far you walk acceptably to God: that is, if you continually bear in mind, that God "ſearcheth the heart

and reins: *that* he is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth:" that conſequently no outward works are acceptable to him, unleſs they ſpring from *holy tempers*, without which no man can have a place in the kingdom of Chriſt and God.

11. But of all holy tempers, and above all others, ſee that you be moſt zealous for *Love*! Count all things loſs in compariſon of this, the love of God and all mankind. It is moſt ſure, that if you give all your goods to feed the poor, yea, and your body to be burned, and have not humble, gentle, patient love, it profiteth you nothing. O let this be deep engraven upon your heart; all is nothing without love.

12. Take then the whole of religion together, juſt as God has revealed it in his word, and be uniformly zealous for every part of it, according to its degree of excellence, grounding all your Zeal on the one foundation, "Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified:" holding faſt this one principle, "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved *me*, and gave himſelf for *me*:" proportion your zeal to the value of its object. Be calmly zealous therefore, firſt, for the *Church*; "the whole ſtate of Chriſt's Church militant here on earth," and in particular for that branch thereof, with which you are more immediately connected. Be more zealous for all thoſe *ordinances* which our bleſſed Lord hath appointed, to continue therein to the end of the world. Be more zealous for thoſe "works of mercy," thoſe "ſacrifices wherewith God is well pleaſed," thoſe marks whereby the Shepherd of Iſrael will know his ſheep at the laſt day. Be

more

more zealous ſtill for "holy tempers, *for* long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, meekneſs, lowlineſs, *and* reſignation:" but be moſt zealous of all for *love*, the queen of all graces, the higheſt perfection in earth or heaven, the very image of the inviſible God, as in men below, ſo in angels above. For "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."

SERMON XCV.

On Redeeming Time.

Ephesians v. 16.

Redeeming the Time.

1. SEE "that ye walk circumspectly," says the Apostle in the preceding verse, "not as fools, but as wise men: Redeeming the time," saving all the time you can for the best purposes; buying up every fleeting moment, out of the hands of sin and Satan, out of the hands of sloth, ease, pleasure, worldly business; the more diligently, because the present "are evil days," days of the grossest ignorance, immorality and profaneness.

2. This seems to be the general meaning of the words. But I purpose at present to consider only one particular way of "redeeming the time," namely from Sleep.

3. This

3. This appears to have been exceeding little conſidered, even by pious men. Many that have been eminently conſcientious in other reſpects, have not been ſo in this. They ſeemed to think it an indifferent thing, whether they ſlept more or leſs, and never ſaw it in the true point of view, as an important branch of Chriſtian Temperance.

That we may have a more juſt conception hereof, I will endeavour to ſhew,

I. What it is to *redeem the time* from Sleep.
II. The evil of not redeeming it. And,
III. The moſt effectual manner of doing it.

I. 1. And firſt, What is it, to "redeem the time from Sleep?" It is, in general, to take that meaſure of Sleep every night, which nature requires, and no more: that meaſure which is moſt conducive to the health and vigour both of the body and mind.

2. But it is objected, "One meaſure will not ſuit all men: ſome require conſiderably more than others. Neither will the ſame meaſure ſuffice even the ſame perſons, at one time as at another. When a perſon is ſick, or if not actually ſo, yet weakened by preceding ſickneſs, he certainly wants more of this natural reſtorative, than he did when in perfect health. And ſo he will, when his ſtrength and ſpirits are exhauſted, by hard or long-continued labour."

3. All this is unqueſtionably true, and confirmed by a thouſand experiments. Whoever therefore they are that have attempted to fix one meaſure of ſleep for all perſons, did not underſtand the nature of the human body, ſo widely different

different in different perſons: as neither did they, who imagined that the ſame meaſure would ſuit even the ſame perſon at all times. One would wonder therefore that ſo great a man as Biſhop *Taylor*, ſhould have formed this ſtrange imagination: much more that the meaſure which he has aſſigned for the General Standard, ſhould be only three hours in four and twenty. That good and ſenſible man, Mr. *Baxter*, was not much nearer the truth: who ſuppoſes four hours in four and twenty will ſuffice for any man. I know an extremely ſenſible man, who was abſolutely perſuaded, that no one living needed to ſleep above five hours in twenty-four. But when he made the experiment himſelf, he quickly relinquiſhed the opinion. And I am fully convinced, by an obſervation continued for more than fifty years, that whatever may be done by extraordinary perſons, or in ſome extraordinary caſes, (wherein perſons have ſubſiſted with very little ſleep for ſome weeks, or even months) a human body can ſcarce continue in health and vigour, without at leaſt ſix hours ſleep in four and twenty. Sure I am, I never met with ſuch an inſtance: I never found either man or woman, that retained vigorous health for one year, with a leſs quantity of ſleep than this.

4. And I have long obſerved, that women in general, want a little more ſleep than men: perhaps becauſe they are in common, of a weaker, as well as a moiſter habit of body. If therefore one might venture to name one ſtandard (though liable to many exceptions and occaſional alterations) I am inclined to think, This would come near to the mark: healthy men in general, need a little above ſix hours ſleep: healthy women, a little above ſeven, in

in four and twenty. I myſelf want ſix hours and a half, and I cannot well ſubſiſt with leſs.

5. If any one deſires to know exactly what quantity of ſleep his own conſtitution requires, he may very eaſily make the experiment which I made about ſixty years ago: I then waked every night about twelve or one, and lay awake for ſome time. I readily concluded, that this aroſe from my lying longer in bed than nature required. To be ſatisfied, I procured an Alarum, which waked me the next morning at ſeven, (near an hour earlier than I roſe the day before) yet I lay awake again at night. The ſecond morning I aroſe at ſix; but notwithſtanding this, I lay awake the ſecond night. The third morning I aroſe at five: but nevertheleſs I lay awake the third night. The fourth morning I aroſe at four, (as by the grace of God, I have done ever ſince.) And I lay awake no more. And I do not now lie awake (taking the year round) a quarter of an hour together in a month. By the ſame experiment, riſing earlier and earlier every morning, may any one find, how much ſleep he really wants.

II. 1. "But why ſhould any one be at ſo much pains? What need is there of being ſo ſcrupulous? Why ſhould we make ourſelves ſo particular? What harm is there in doing as our neighbours do? Suppoſe in lying from ten till ſix or ſeven in ſummer, and till eight or nine in winter?"

2. If you would conſider this queſtion fairly, you will need a good deal of candor and impartiality; as what I am about to ſay will probably be quite new, different from any thing you ever heard

heard in your life: different from the judgment, at leaſt, from the example of your parents, and your neareſt relations: nay, and perhaps of the moſt religious perſons you ever were acquainted with. Lift up therefore your heart to the Spirit of truth, and beg of him to ſhine upon it, that without reſpecting any man's perſon, you may ſee and follow the truth as it is in Jeſus.

3. Do you really deſire to know, what harm there is, in not redeeming all the time you can from Sleep? Suppoſe in ſpending therein an hour a day more than nature requires? Why, firſt, *it hurts your ſubſtance*, it is throwing away ſix hours a week, which might turn to ſome temporal account. If you can do any work, you might earn ſomething in that time, were it ever ſo ſmall. And you have no need to throw even this way. If you do not want it yourſelf, give it to them that do: you know ſome of them that are not far off. If you are of no trade, ſtill you may ſo employ the time, that it will bring money, or money's worth, to yourſelf, or others.

4. The not redeeming all the time you can from ſleep, the ſpending more time therein, than your conſtitution neceſſarily requires, in the ſecond place, *hurts your health*. Nothing can be more certain than this, though it is not commonly obſerved, becauſe the evil ſteals on you by ſlow and inſenſible degrees. In this gradual, and almoſt imperceptible manner, it lays the foundation of many diſeaſes. It is the chief, real (though unſuſpected) cauſe of all Nervous Diſeaſes in particular. Many enquiries have been made, Why Nervous Diſorders are ſo much more common among us than among our anceſtors?

ancestors? Other causes may frequently concur: but the chief is, we lie longer in bed. Instead of rising at four most of us, who are not obliged to work for our bread, lie till seven, eight, or nine. We need enquire no farther. This sufficiently accounts for the large increase of these painful disorders.

5. It may be observed, that most of these arise, not barely from sleeping too long, but even from what we imagine to be quite harmless, the lying too long in bed. By *soaking* (as it is emphatically called) so long between warm sheets, the flesh is, as it were, parboiled, and becomes soft and flabby. The nerves in the mean time are quite unstrung, and all the train of melancholy symptoms, faintness, tremors, lowness of spirits, (so called) come on, till life itself is a burden.

6. One common effect of either sleeping too long, or lying too long in bed, is Weakness of sight, particularly that weakness, which is of the nervous kind. When I was young, my sight was remarkably weak. Why is it stronger now than it was forty years ago? I impute this principally to the blessing of God, who fits us for whatever he calls us to. But undoubtedly the outward means which he has been pleased to bless, was the rising early in the morning.

7. A still greater objection to the not rising early, the not redeeming all the time we can from sleep, is, It *hurts the soul* as well as the body: it is a sin against God. And this indeed it must necessarily be, on both the preceding accounts. For we cannot waste, or (which comes to the same thing) not improve any part of our worldly substance, neither can we

we impair our own health, without ſinning againſt him.

8. But this faſhionable Intemperance does alſo hurt the ſoul in a more direct manner. It ſows the ſeeds of fooliſh and hurtful deſires: it dangerouſly inflames our natural appetites; which a perſon ſtretching and yawning in bed, is juſt prepared to gratify. It breeds and continually increaſes ſloth, ſo often objected to the Engliſh nation. It opens the way, and prepares the ſoul for every other kind of intemperance. It breeds an univerſal ſoftneſs and faintneſs of ſpirit, making us afraid of every little inconevenince, unwilling to deny ourſelves any pleaſure, or to take up or bear any croſs. And how then ſhall we be able (without which we muſt drop into hell) to "take the kingdom of heaven by violence?" It totally unfits us for "enduring hardſhip as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt:" and conſequently for "fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life."

9. In how beautiful a manner does that great man, Mr. Law, treat this important ſubject!* Part of his words I cannot but here ſubjoin, for the uſe of every ſenſible reader.

"I take it for granted, that every Chriſtian who is in health is up early in the morning. For it is much more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, a perſon is up early, becauſe he is a Chriſtian, than becauſe he is a labourer, or a tradeſman, or a ſervant.

We conceive an abhorrence of a man that is in bed, when he ſhould be at his labour. We cannot think good of him, who is ſuch a ſlave to drowſineſs, to neglect his buſineſs for it.

Let

* Viz. Redeeming Time from Sleep.

Let this therefore teach us to conceive, how odious we muſt appear to God, if we are in bed, ſhut up in ſleep, when we ſhould be praiſing God; and are ſuch ſlaves to drowſineſs, as to neglect our devotions for it.

Sleep is ſuch a dull, ſtupid ſtate of exiſtence, that even among mere animals, we deſpiſe them moſt which are moſt drowſy. He therefore that chooſes to inlarge the ſlothful indolence of ſleep, rather than "be early at his devotions; chooſes the dulleſt refreſhment of the body, before the nobleſt enjoyments of the ſoul. He chooſes that ſtate which is a reproach to mere animals, before that exerciſe which is the glory of angels."

10. Beſides, he that cannot deny himſelf this drowſy indulgence, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up, than he is prepared for faſting or any other act of ſelf-denial. He may indeed more eaſily read over a form of prayer, than he can perform theſe duties: but he is no more diſpoſed for the ſpirit of prayer, than he is diſpoſed for faſting. For ſleep thus indulged gives a ſoftneſs to all our tempers, and makes us unable to reliſh any thing but what ſuits an idle ſtate of mind, as ſleep does. So that a perſon who is a ſlave to this idleneſs, is in the ſame temper when he is up. Every thing that is idle or ſenſual pleaſes him. And every thing that requires trouble or ſelf-denial is hateful to him, for the ſame reaſon that he hates to riſe.

11. It is not poſſible for an Epicure to be truly devout. He muſt renounce his ſenſuality, before he can reliſh the happineſs of devotion. For he that turns ſleep into an idle indulgence, does as much to corrupt his ſoul, to make it a ſlave to bodily appetites, as an Epicure does. He does

not disorder his health, as notorious acts of intemperance do; but like any more moderate course of indulgence, it silently and by smaller degrees, wears away the spirit of religion, and sinks the soul into dulness and sensuality.

Self-denial of all kinds is the very life and soul of piety. But he that has not so much of it as to be able to be early at his prayers, cannot think that he has taken up his cross, and is following Christ.

What conquest has he got over himself? What right hand has he cut off? What trials is he prepared for? What sacrifice is he ready to offer to God, who cannot be so cruel to himself as to rise to prayer at such a time, as the drudging part of the world are content to rise to their labour?

12. Some people will not scruple to tell you that they indulge themselves in sleep, because they have nothing to do: and that if they had any business to rise to, they would not lose so much of their time in sleep. But they must be told, that they mistake the matter: that they have a great deal of business to do: they have a hardened heart to change; they have the whole spirit of religion to get. For surely he that thinks he has nothing to do, because nothing but his prayers want him, may justly be said to have the whole spirit of religion to seek.

You must not therefore consider, how small a fault it is, to rise late; but how great a misery it is, to want the spirit of religion: and to live in such softness and idleness as make you incapable of the fundamental duties of Christianity.

If I was to desire you, not to study the gratification of your palate, I would not insist upon the

sin

ſin of waſting your money though it is a great one; but I would deſire you to renounce ſuch a way of life, becauſe it ſupports you in ſuch a ſtate of ſenſuality, as renders you incapable of reliſhing the moſt eſſential doctrines of religion."

For the ſame reaſon, I do not inſiſt much upon the ſin of waſting your time in ſleep, though it be a great one; but I deſire you to renounce this indulgence, becauſe it gives a ſoftneſs and idleneſs to your ſoul, and is ſo contrary to that lively, zealous, watchful, ſelf-denying ſpirit which was not only the ſpirit of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the ſpirit of all the ſaints and martyrs that have ever been among men, but muſt be the ſpirit of all thoſe who would not ſink in the common corruption of the world.

19. Here therefore we muſt fix our charge againſt this practice. We muſt blame it, not as having this or that particular evil, but as a general habit that extends itſelf through our whole ſpirit, and ſupports a ſtate of mind that is wholly wrong.

It is contrary to piety: not as accidental ſlips or miſtakes in life are contrary to it: but in ſuch a manner as an ill ſtate of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you were to riſe early every morning, as an inſtance of ſelf-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time and fitting your ſpirit for prayer, you would ſoon find the advantage. This method, though it ſeems but a ſmall circumſtance, might be a means of "great piety. It would conſtantly keep it in your mind, that ſoftneſs and idleneſs are the bane of religion.

It would teach you to exercise power over yourself, and to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul. And what is so planted and watered, will certainly have an increase from God."

III. 1. It now only remains, to enquire, in the third place, How we may redeem the time? How we may proceed in this important affair: in what manner shall we most effectually practise this important branch of temperance?

I advise all of you, who are thoroughly convinced of the unspeakable importance of it, suffer not that conviction to die away, but instantly begin to act suitably to it. Only do not depend on your own strength: if you do, you will be utterly baffled. Be deeply sensible, that as you are not able to do any thing good of yourselves, so here in particular, all your strength, all your resolution will avail nothing. Whoever trusts in himself will be confounded. I never found an exception. I never knew one who trusted in his own strength that could keep this resolution for a twelvemonth.

2. I advise you, secondly, Cry to the Strong for strength. Call upon him that hath all power in heaven and earth. And believe that he will answer the prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips. As you cannot have too little confidence in yourself, so you cannot have too much in him. Then set out in faith: and surely his strength shall be made perfect in your weakness.

3. I advise you, thirdly, Add to your faith, prudence: use the most rational means to attain your purpose. Particularly begin at the right end, otherwise you will lose your labour. If you

desire to rise early, sleep early: secure this point at all events. In spite of the most dear and agreeable companions, in spight of their most earnest solicitations, in spite of entreaties, railleries or reproaches, rigorously keep your hour. Rise up precisely at your time, and retire without ceremony. Keep your hour, notwithstanding the most pressing business: lay all things by till the morning. Be it ever so great a cross, ever so great self-denial, keep your hour, or all is over.

4. I advise you, fourthly, Be steady. Keep your hour of rising, without intermission. Do not rise two mornings, and lie in bed the third; but what you do once, do always. "But my head aches." Do not regard that. It will soon be over. "But I am uncommonly drowsy; my eyes are quite heavy." Then you must not parly; otherwise it is a lost case: but start up at once. And if your drowsiness does not go off, lie down for awhile, an hour or two after. But let nothing make a breach upon this rule, rise and dress yourself at your hour.

5. Perhaps you will say, "The advice is good; but it comes too late: I have made a breach already. I did rise constantly for a season, nothing hindered me. But I gave way by little and little, and I have now left it off for a considerable time!" Then in the name of God begin again! Begin to morrow; or rather to-night, by going to bed early, in spite of either company or business. Begin with more self-diffidence than before, but with more confidence in God. Only follow these few rules, and my God for yours, God will give you victory. In a

little time the difficulty will be over: but the benefit will laſt for ever.

6. If you ſay, "But I cannot do now as I did then; for I am not what I was. I have many diſorders, my ſpirits are low, my hands ſhake: I am all relaxed." I anſwer, All theſe are nervous ſymptoms; and they all partly ariſe from your taking too much ſleep; nor is it probable they will ever be removed, unleſs you remove the cauſe. Therefore on this very account (not only to puniſh yourſelf for your folly and unfaithfulneſs, but) in order to recover your health and ſtrength, reſume your early riſing. You have no other way; you have nothing elſe to do. You have no other poſſible means of recovering, in any tolerable degree, your health both of body and mind. Do not murder yourſelf outright. Do not run on in the path that leads to the gates of death! As I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, In the name of God, this very day, ſet out anew. True, it will be more difficult than it was at the beginning. But bear the difficulty which you have brought upon yourſelf, and it will not laſt long. The Sun of Righteouſneſs will ſoon ariſe again, and will heal both your ſoul and your body.

7. But do not imagine that this ſingle point, riſing early, will ſuffice to make you a Chriſtian. No: although that ſingle point, the not riſing, may keep you a Heathen, void of the whole Chriſtian ſpirit; although this alone (eſpecially if you had once conquered it) will keep you cold, formal, heartleſs, dead: and make it impoſſible for you to get one ſtep forward in vital holineſs: yet this alone will go but a little way, to make you a real Chriſtian. It is but one ſtep out of many: but it is one. And having taken this, go

forward.

forward. Go on to univerſal ſelf-denial, to temperance in all things: to a firm reſolution of taking up daily every croſs whereto you are called. Go on, in a full purſuit of all the mind that was in Chriſt, of inward, and then outward holineſs: ſo ſhall you be not almoſt, but altogether a Chriſtian: ſo ſhall you finiſh your courſe with joy: you ſhall awake up after his likeneſs and be ſatisfied.

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

On Family Religion.

Joshua xxiv. 15.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

1. IN the foregoing verses we read, That *Joshua*, now grown old, "gathered the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges and officers, and they presented themselves before the Lord," ver. 1. And *Joshua* rehearsed to them the great things which God had done for their fathers, ver. 2—13, concluding with that strong exhortation, "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side the flood Jordan, and in Egypt," ver. 14. Can any thing be more astonishing than this! That even in *Egypt*, yea, and in the wilderness, where they were daily fed, and

and both day and night guided by miracles, the Iſraelites in general ſhould worſhip idols, in flat defiance of the Lord their God! He proceeds: "If it ſeemeth evil to you to ſerve the Lord, chooſe ye this day whom ye will ſerve: whether the gods your fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whoſe land ye dwell. But as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord."

2. A reſolution this, worthy of a hoary-headed ſaint, who had had large experience, from his youth up, of the goodneſs of the Maſter to whom he had devoted himſelf, and the advantages of his ſervice. How much is it to be wiſhed, that all who have taſted that the Lord is gracious, all whom he has brought out of the land of *Egypt*, out of the bondage of ſin: thoſe eſpecially who are united together in chriſtian fellowſhip, would adopt this wiſe reſolution! Then would the work of the Lord proſper in our land; then would his word run and be glorified. Then would multitudes of ſinners in every place ſtretch out their hands unto God, until "the glory of the Lord cover the land, as the waters cover the ſea."

3. On the contrary, what will the conſequence be, if they do not adopt this reſolution? If family-religion be neglected? If care be not taken of the riſing generation? Will not the preſent revival of religion, in a ſhort time die away? Will it not be, as the Hiſtorian ſpeaks of the Roman State in its infancy, *Res unius ætatis?* An event that has its beginning and end, within the ſpace of one generation? Will it not be a confirmation of that melancholy remark of *Luther's* That "a revival of religion never laſts longer

longer than one generation?" By a generation (as he explains himself) he means thirty years. But bleſſed be God this remark does not hold, with regard to the preſent inſtance: ſeeing this revival from its riſe in the year 1729, has already laſted above fifty years.

4. Have we not already ſeen ſome of the unhappy conſequences of good men's not adopting this reſolution? Is there not a generation ariſen, even within this period, yea, and from pious parents, that know not the Lord? That have neither his love in their hearts, nor his fear before their eyes? How many of them already "deſpiſe their fathers, and mock at the counſel of their mothers?" How many are utter ſtrangers to real religion, to the life and power of it? And not a few have ſhaken off all religion, and abandoned themſelves to all manner of wickedneſs! Now although this may ſometimes be the caſe, even of children educated in a pious manner, yet this caſe is very rare: I have met with ſome, but not many inſtances of it: the wickedneſs of the children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents. For it is a general, though not univerſal rule, though it admits of ſome exceptions, "Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

5. But what is the purport of this reſolution, "I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord?" In order to underſtand and practiſe this, let us firſt enquire, what it is to *ſerve the Lord?* Secondly, who are included in that expreſſion, *my houſe?* and Thirdly, What can we do, that "we and our houſe *may* ſerve the Lord?"

I. 1. We

I. 1. We may enquire, first, What it is to *serve the Lord*, not as a Jew, but as a Christian? Not only with an outward service (though some of the Jews undoubtedly went further than this) but with inward; with the [illegible], "worshipping him in [illegible]." The first thing implied in this [illegible] ing in the name of the Son of God. We cannot perform an acceptable service to God, till we believe on Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Here the spiritual worship of God begins. As soon as any one has the witness in himself, as soon as he can say, "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," he begins truly to *serve the Lord*.

2. As soon as he believes, he loves God, which is another thing implied in *serving the Lord*. "We love him, because he first loved us," of which faith is the evidence. The love of a pardoning "God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Indeed this love may admit of a thousand degrees: but still every one as long as he believes, may truly declare before God, "Lord thou knowest that I love thee." Thou knowest that "my desire is unto thee and unto the remembrance of thy name."

3. And if any man truly love God, he cannot but love his brother also. Gratitude to our Creator will surely produce benevolence to our fellow-creatures. If we love him, we cannot but love one another, as Christ loved us. We feel our souls enlarged in love toward every child of man. And toward all the children of God we put on "bowels of kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forgiving one another," if we have a complaint

complaint againſt any, "even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us."

4. One thing more is implied in *ſerving the Lord*, namely, the obeying him; the readily walking in all his ways, the doing his will from the heart. Like thoſe "his ſervants *above*, who do his pleaſure, *who* keep his commandments and hearken to the voice of his words," theſe his ſervants below hearken unto his voice, diligently keep his commandments, carefully avoid whatever he has forbidden, and zealouſly do whatever he has enjoined: ſtudying always to have a conſcience void of offence, toward God and toward man.

II. "I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord," will every real Chriſtian ſay. But who are included in that expreſſion, *My houſe?* This is the next point to be conſidered.

1. The perſon in your houſe that claims your firſt and neareſt attention, is undoubtedly your wife: ſeeing you are to love her, even as Chriſt hath loved the Church, when he laid down his life for it, that he might "purify it unto himſelf, not having ſpot or wrinkle or any ſuch thing." The ſame end is every huſband to purſue, in all his intercourſe with his wife: to uſe every poſſible means, that ſhe may be freed from every ſpot, and may walk unblameable in love.

2. Next to your wife are your children; immortal ſpirits whom God hath for a time entruſted to your care, that you may train them up in all holineſs, and fit them for the enjoyment of God in eternity. This is a glorious and important truſt; ſeeing one ſoul is of more value than all the world beſide. Every child therefore you are to watch over with the utmoſt care,

care, that when you are called to give an account of each to the Father of Spirits, you may give your accounts with joy and not with grief.

3. Your ſervants of whatever kind, you are to look upon as a kind of *ſecondary children:* theſe likewiſe God has committed to your charge, as one that muſt give an account: for every one under your roof that has a ſoul to be ſaved, is under your care: not only indented ſervants, who are legally engaged to remain with you for a term of years: not only hired ſervants, whether they voluntarily contract for a longer or ſhorter time: but alſo thoſe who ſerve you by the week or day; for theſe too are in a meaſure delivered into your hands. And it is not the will of *your* Maſter who is in heaven, that any of theſe ſhould go out of your hands, before they have received ſomething from you more valuable than gold or ſilver. Yea, and you are in a degree accountable, even for *the ſtranger that is within your gates.* As you are particularly required, to ſee that he does *no manner of work* on the Lord's-day, while he is within your gates; ſo, by parity of reaſon, you are required, to do all that is in your power, to prevent his ſinning againſt God in any other inſtance.

III. Let us enquire, in the third place, What can we do, that all theſe may *ſerve the Lord?*

1. May we not endeavour, firſt, To *reſtrain* them from all outward ſin? From profane ſwearing, from taking the name of God in vain; from doing any needleſs work, or taking any paſtime on the Lord's-day? This labour of love you owe even to your viſitants; much more to your wife, children and ſervants. The former,

over whom you have the leaſt influence, you may reſtrain by argument or mild perſuaſion. If you find, that after repeated trials, they will not yield either to one or the other, it is your bounden duty, to ſet ceremony aſide, and to diſmiſs them from your houſe. Servants alſo, whether by the day, or for a longer ſpace, if you cannot reclaim, either by reaſoning, added to your example, or by gentle or ſevere reproofs, though frequently repeated, you muſt in anywiſe diſmiſs from your family, though it ſhould be ever ſo inconvenient.

2. But you cannot diſmiſs your wife, unleſs for the cauſe of fornication, that is, adultery. What then can be done, if ſhe is habituated to any other open ſin? I cannot find in the Bible, that a huſband has authority to ſtrike his wife on any account: even ſuppoſe ſhe ſtruck him firſt; unleſs his life were in imminent danger. I never have known one inſtance yet of a wife that was mended thereby. I have heard indeed of ſome ſuch inſtances; but as I did not ſee them, I do not believe them. It ſeems to me, all that can be done in this caſe, is to be done partly by example, partly by argument or perſuaſion, each applied in ſuch a manner as is dictated by chriſtian prudence. If evil can ever be overcome, it muſt be *overcome by good*. It cannot be overcome by evil: we cannot beat the devil with his own weapons. Therefore if this evil cannot be overcome by good, we are called to ſuffer it. We are then called to ſay, 'This is the croſs which God hath choſen for me. He ſurely permits it for wiſe ends: "let him do what ſeemeth him good." Whenever he ſees it to be beſt, he will remove this cup from me.' Mean time continue

tinue in earneſt prayer, knowing that with God no word is impoſſible: and that he will either in due time take the temptation away, or make it a bleſſing to your ſoul.

3. Your children while they are young, you may reſtrain from evil, not only by advice, perſuaſion and reproof, but alſo by correction; only remembering, that this means is to be uſed laſt; not till all other have been tried, and found to be ineffectual. And even then you ſhould take the utmoſt care to avoid the very appearance of paſſion. Whatever is done ſhould be done with mildneſs; nay, indeed with kindneſs too. Otherwiſe your own ſpirit will ſuffer loſs; and the child will reap little advantage.

4. But ſome will tell you, "All this is loſt labour; a child need not be corrected at all. Inſtruction, perſuaſion, and advice, will be ſufficient for any child without correction: eſpecially if gentle reproof be added, as occaſion may require." I anſwer, there may be particular inſtances, wherein this method may be ſucceſsful. But you muſt not in anywiſe lay this down as an univerſal rule: unleſs you ſuppoſe yourſelf wiſer than Solomon, or, to ſpeak more properly, wiſer than God. For it is God himſelf, who beſt knoweth his own creatures, that has told us expreſsly, "He that ſpareth the rod hateth the child; but he that loveth him chaſteneth him betimes," Prov. xiii. 24. And upon this is grounded that plain commandment, directed to all that fear God, "Chaſten thy ſon while there is hope; and let not thy ſoul ſpare for his crying," chap. xix. 18.

5. May we not endeavour, ſecondly, to *inſtruct* them? To take care that every perſon

who is under our roof, have all such knowledge as is necessary to salvation? To see that our wife, servants and children be taught all those things which belong to their eternal peace? In order to this, you should provide that not only your wife, but your servants also may enjoy all the public means of instruction. On the Lord's-day in particular, you should so fore-cast what is necessary to be done at home, that they may have an opportunity of attending all the ordinances of God. Yea, and you should take care that they have some time every day for reading, meditation and prayer. And you should enquire whether they do actually employ that time, in the exercises for which it is allowed. Neither should any day pass, without family-prayer, seriously and solemnly performed.

6. You should particularly endeavour to instruct your children, early, plainly, frequently and patiently. Instruct them *early* from the first hour that you perceive reason begins to dawn. Truth may then begin to shine upon the mind far earlier than we are apt to suppose. And whoever watches the first openings of the understanding, may by little and little supply fit matter for it to work upon, and may turn the eye of the soul toward good things, as well as toward bad or trifling ones. Whenever a child begins to speak, you may be assured reason begins to work. I know no cause why a parent should not just then begin to speak of the best things, the things of God. And from that time no opportunity should be lost, of instilling all truths as they are capable of receiving.

7. But the speaking to them early will not avail, unless you likewise speak to them *plainly*.

Use

Uſe ſuch words as little children may underſtand, juſt ſuch as they uſe themſelves. Carefully obſerve the few ideas which they have already, and endeavour to graft what you ſay upon them. To take a little example: bid the child look up; and aſk, "What do you ſee there?" "The Sun:" "See, how bright it is! Feel, how warm it ſhines upon your hand! Look, how it makes the graſs and flowers to grow, and the trees and every thing look green! But God (though you cannot ſee him) is above the ſky, and is a deal brighter than the Sun! It is he, it is God that made the Sun, and you and me, and every thing. It is he that makes the graſs and the flowers grow: that makes the trees green, and the fruit to come upon them! Think what he can do! He can do whatever he pleaſes. He can ſtrike me or you dead in a moment. But he loves you: he loves to do you good. He loves to make you happy. Should you not then love *Him!* You love *me*, becauſe I love you and do you good. But it is God that makes me love you. Therefore you ſhould love him. And he will teach you, how to love him."

8. While you are ſpeaking in this, or ſome ſuch manner, you ſhould be continually lifting up your heart to God, beſeeching him to open the eyes of their underſtanding, and to pour his light upon them. He, and he alone, can make them to differ herein from the beaſts that periſh. He alone can apply your words to their hearts: without which all your labour will be in vain. But whenever the Holy Ghoſt teaches, there is no delay in learning.

9. But if you would ſee the fruit of your labour, you muſt teach them not only early and

plainly but *frequently* too. It would be of little or no service to do it, only once or twice a week. How often do you feed their bodies? Not less than three times a day. And is the soul of less value than the body? Will you not then feed this as often? If you find this a tiresome task, there is certainly something wrong in your own mind. You do not love them enough: or you do not love him, who is your father and their father. Humble yourself before him! Beg that he would give you more love; and love will make the labour light.

10. But it will not avail to teach them both early, plainly and frequently, unless you *persevere* therein. Never leave off, never intermit your labour of love, till you see the fruit of it. But in order to this, you will find the absolute need of being endued with power from on high: without which, I am persuaded, none ever had, or will have patience sufficient for the work. Otherwise the inconceivable dulness of some children, and the giddiness or perverseness of others, would induce them to give up the irksome task, and let them follow their own imagination.

11. And suppose after you have done this, after you have taught your children from their early infancy, in the plainest manner you could, omitting no opportunity, and persevering therein, you did not presently see any fruit of your labour, you must not conclude that there will be none. Possibly the "bread which you have cast upon the waters *may be* found after many days." The seed which has long remained in the ground, may at length spring up into a plentiful harvest. Especially if you do not restrain prayer before God, if you continue instant herein with all

all ſupplication. Mean time, whatever the effect of this be upon others, your reward is with the Moſt High.

10. Many parents, on the other hand, preſently ſee the fruit of the ſeed they have ſown, and have the comfort of obſerving, that their children grow in grace in the ſame proportion as they grow in years. Yet they have not done all. They have ſtill upon their hands another taſk, ſometimes of no ſmall difficulty. Their children are now old enough to go to ſchool. But to what ſchool is it adviſeable to ſend them?

13. Let it be remembered, that I do not ſpeak to the wild, giddy, thoughtleſs world, but to thoſe that fear God. I aſk then, "For what end do you ſend your children to ſchool?" "Why, that they may be fit to live in the world." In which world do you mean? This or the next? Perhaps you thought of this world only: and had forgot that there is a world to come: yea, and one that will laſt for ever! Pray take this into your account, and ſend them to ſuch maſters, as will keep it always before their eyes. Otherwiſe to ſend them to ſchool, (permit me to ſpeak plainly,) is little better than ſending them to the devil. At all events then ſend your boys, if you have any concern for their ſouls, not to any of the large, public ſchools, (for they are nurſeries of all manner of wickedneſs,) but to a private ſchool, kept by ſome pious man, who endeavours to inſtruct a ſmall number of children in religion and learning together.

14. But what ſhall I do with my girls? By no means ſend them to a large boarding-ſchool. In theſe ſeminaries too the children teach one another, pride, vanity, affectation, intrigue, artifice,

fice, and in ſhort, every thing which a Chriſtian woman ought not to learn. Suppoſe a girl were well inclined, yet what would ſhe do in a croud of children, not one of whom has any thought of God, or the leaſt concern for her ſoul? Is it likely, is it poſſible, ſhe ſhould retain any fear of God, or any thought of ſaving her ſoul in ſuch company? Eſpecially as their whole converſation points another way, and turns upon things which one would wiſh ſhe would never think of. I never yet knew a pious, ſenſible woman that had been bred at a large boarding-ſchool, who did not aver, one might as well ſend a young maid to be bred in *Drury-lane*.

15. "But where then ſhall I ſend my girls?"—If you cannot breed them up yourſelf, (as my mother did, who bred up ſeven daughters, to years of maturity,) ſend them to ſome miſtreſs that truly fears God, one whoſe life is a pattern to her ſcholars, and who has only ſo many, that ſhe can watch over each, as one that muſt give account to God. Forty years ago I did not know ſuch a miſtreſs in *England*: but you may now find ſeveral: you may find ſuch a miſtreſs, and ſuch a ſchool at *Highgate*, at *Deptford*, near *Briſtol*, in *Cheſter*, near *Leeds*, *Dublin*, or *Tullamore* &c.

16. We may ſuppoſe your ſons have now been long enough at ſchool, and you are thinking of ſome buſineſs for them. Before you determine any thing on this head, ſee that your eye be ſingle. Is it ſo? Is it your view, to please God herein? It is well, if you take him into your account. But ſurely if you love or fear God yourſelf, this will be your firſt conſideration; in what buſineſs will your ſon be moſt likely to love and ſerve God? In what employment will he

he have the greateſt advantage, for laying up treaſure in heaven? I have been ſhocked above meaſure, in obſerving how little this is attended to, even by pious parents! Even theſe conſider only how he may get moſt money: not how he may get moſt holineſs! Even theſe, upon this glorious motive, ſend him to a Heathen maſter, and into a family, where there is not the very form, much leſs the power of religion! Upon this motive, they fix him in a buſineſs, which will neceſſarily expoſe him to ſuch temptations, as will leave him not a probability, if a poſſibility, of ſerving God. O ſavage parents! Unnatural, diabolical cruelty!—If you believe there is another world.

"But what ſhall I do?" Set God before your eyes, and do all things with a view to pleaſe him. Then you will find a maſter, of whatever profeſſion, that loves, or at leaſt fears God; and you will find a family, wherein is the form of religion, if not the power alſo. Your ſon may nevertheleſs ſerve the devil if he will: but it is probable, he will not. And do not regard, if he get leſs money, provided he get more holineſs. It is enough, though he have leſs of earthly goods, if he ſecure the poſſeſſion of heaven.

17. There is one circumſtance more wherein you will have great need of the wiſdom from above. Your ſon or your daughter is now of age to marry, and deſires your advice relative to it. Now you know what the world calls a *good match*, one whereby much money is gained. Undoubtedly it is ſo, if it be true that money always brings happineſs. But I doubt it is not true: money ſeldom brings happineſs, either in this world or the world to come. Then let no

man

man deceive you with vain words: riches and happiness seldom dwell together. Therefore if you are wise, you will not seek riches for your children, by their marriage. See that your eye be single in this also: aim simply at the glory of God, and the real happiness of your children, both in time and eternity. It is a melancholy thing, to see how christian parents rejoice, in selling their son or their daughter to a wealthy heathen! And do you seriously call this "*A good match!*" Thou fool, by a parity of reason, thou mayst call hell *a good lodging*, and the devil a *good master*. O learn a better lesson from a better master. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, *both for* thyself and thy children, and all other things shall be added unto you."

18. It is undoubtedly true, that if you are steadily determined to walk in this path; to endeavour by every possible means, that you and your house may thus serve the Lord; that every member of your family may worship him, not only in form, but in spirit, and in truth: you will have need to use all the grace, and all the courage, all the wisdom which God has given you. For you will find such hinderances in the way, as only the mighty power of God can enable you to break through. You will have all the "Saints of the world" to grapple with, who will think, you carry things too far. You will have all the powers of darkness against you, employing both force and fraud: and above all, the deceitfulness of your own heart, which if you will hearken to it, will supply you with many reasons why you should be a *little more* conformable to the world. But as you have begun, go on in the name

name of the Lord, and in the power of his might! Set the smiling and the frowning world, with the prince thereof, at defiance. Follow reason and the oracles of God; not the fashions and customs of men. *Keep thyself pure.* Whatever others do, let you and your house *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.* Let you, your yoke-fellow, your children and your servants be all on the Lord's side; sweetly drawing together in one yoke, walking in all his commandments and ordinances, till every one of you *shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.*

SERMON

SERMON XCVII.

On the Education of Children.

PROVERBS xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way wherein he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

1. WE muſt not imagine, that theſe words are to be underſtood in an abſolute ſenſe, as if no child that had been trained up in the way wherein he ſhould go, had ever departed from it. Matter of fact will by no means agree with this. So far from it, that it has been a common obſervation, Some of the beſt parents have the worſt children. It is true, this might ſometimes be the caſe, becauſe good men have not always a good underſtanding. And without this it is hardly to be expected, that they will know how to train up their children. Beſides, thoſe who are in other reſpects good men, have often

often too much eaſineſs of temper: ſo that they go no farther in reſtraining their children from evil, than old *Eli* did, when he ſaid gently, "Nay, my ſons, the report I hear of you is not good." This then is no contradiction to the aſſertion; for their children are not "trained up in the way wherein they ſhould go." But it muſt be acknowledged, ſome have been trained therein with all poſſible care and diligence: and yet before they were old, yea, in the ſtrength of their years, they did utterly depart from it.

2. The words then muſt be underſtood with ſome limitation, and then they contain an unqueſtionable truth: It is a general, though not an univerſal promiſe, and many have found the happy accompliſhment of it. As this is the moſt probable method for making their children pious, which any parents can take, ſo it generally, although not always, meets with the deſired ſucceſs. The God of their fathers is with their children: he bleſſes their endeavours: and they have the ſatisfaction of leaving their religion, as well as their worldly ſubſtance, to thoſe that deſcend from them.

3. But what is *the way wherein* a child *ſhould go?* And how ſhall we *train him up* therein? The ground of this is admirably well laid down by Mr. *Law*, in his "Serious Call to a devout life." Part of his words are,

"Had we continued perfect, as God created the firſt man, perhaps the perfection of our nature had been a ſufficient ſelf-inſtructor for every one. But as ſickneſs and diſeaſes have created the neceſſity of medicines and phyſicians, ſo the diſorders of our rational nature have introduced the neceſſity of education and tutors.

"And as the only end of a phyſician is, to reſtore nature to its own ſtate, ſo the only end of education is, to reſtore our rational nature to its proper ſtate. Education therefore is to be conſidered, as reaſon borrowed at ſecond-hand, which is, as far as it can, to ſupply the loſs of original perfection. And as phyſic may juſtly be called the art of reſtoring health, ſo education ſhould be conſidered in no other light than as the art of recovering to man his rational perfection.

"This was the end purſued by the youths that attended upon *Pythagoras*, *Socrates* and *Plato*. Their every day leſſons and inſtructions were ſo many lectures upon the nature of man, his true end, and the right uſe of his faculties: upon the immortality of the ſoul, its relation to God; the agreeableneſs of virtue to the divine nature; upon the neceſſity of temperance, juſtice, mercy, and truth, and the folly of indulging our paſſions.

"Now as Chriſtianity has, as it were, new created the moral and religious world, and ſet every thing that is reaſonable, wiſe, holy and deſirable, in its true point of light: ſo one would expect the education of children ſhould be as much mended by Chriſtianity, as the doctrines of religion are.

"As it has introduced a new ſtate of things, and ſo fully informed us of the nature of man and the end of his creation: as it has fixt all our goods and evils, taught us the means of purifying our ſouls, of pleaſing God and being happy eternally; one might naturally ſuppoſe that every Chriſtian country abounded with ſchools, not only for teaching a few queſtions and anſwers of a catechiſm,

a catechism, but for the forming, training and practising children in such a course of life, as the sublimest doctrines of Christianity require.

"An education under *Pythagoras* or *Socrates* had no other end but to teach children, to think, and act as *Pythagoras* and *Socrates* did.

"And is it not reasonable to suppose, that a Christian education should have no other end, but to teach them how to think and judge and act according to the strictest rules of Christianity?

"At least one would suppose, that in all Christian schools, the teaching them to begin their lives in the spirit of Christianity, in such abstinence, humility, sobriety and devotion as Christianity requires, should not only be more, but a hundred times more regarded than any or all things else.

"For those that educate us should imitate our guardian angels, suggest nothing to our minds, but what is wise and holy; help us to discover every false judgment of our minds, and to subdue every wrong passion of our hearts.

"And it is as reasonable to expect and require all this benefit from a Christian education, as to require that physic should strengthen all that is right in our nature, and remove all our diseases."

4. Let it be carefully remembered all this time, That God, not man, is the Physician of Souls: that it is he and none else, who *giveth medicine to heal* our natural *sickness*: that all *the help which is done upon earth, he doth it himself*; that none of all the children of men is able to *bring a clean thing out of an unclean*: and in a word, that *it is God who worketh in us, both to will*

will and to do of his good pleasure. But it is generally his pleasure to work by his creatures: to help man by man. He honours men, to be in this sense, *workers together with him.* By this means the reward is ours, while the glory redounds to him.

5. This being premised, in order to see distinctly, What is the way wherein we should train up a child, let us consider, What are the diseases of his nature? What are these spiritual diseases, which every one that is born of a woman, brings with him into the world?

Is not the first of these *Atheism?* After all that has been so plausibly written concerning "the innate idea of God:" after all that has been said, of its being common to all men, in all ages and nations: it does not appear, that man has naturally any more idea of God, than any of the beasts of the field: he has no knowledge of God at all; no fear of God at all: neither is God in all his thoughts. Whatever change may afterwards be wrought, (whether by the grace of God, or by his own reflection, or by education) he is by nature a mere Atheist.

6. Indeed it may be said, that every man is by nature, as it were, his own god. He worships himself. He is, in his own conception, absolute Lord of himself. *Dryden's* Hero speaks only according to nature, when he says, "Myself am King of *me.*" He seeks himself in all things. He pleases himself. And why not? Who is Lord over him? *His own will* is his only law: he does this or that, because it is his good pleasure. In the same spirit as the son of the morning said in old time,—"I *will* sit upon the sides of the North," he says, "*I will* do thus or thus."

And

And do we not find ſenſible men on every ſide, who are of the ſelf-ſame ſpirit? who, if aſked, "Why did you do this?" will readily anſwer, "Becauſe I had a mind to it."

7. Another evil diſeaſe which every human ſoul brings into the world with him, is *pride*; a continual proneneſs to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think. Every man can diſcern more or leſs of this diſeaſe, in every one,—but himſelf. And indeed, if he could diſcern it in himſelf, it would ſubſiſt no longer: for he would then in conſequence think of himſelf, juſt as he ought to think.

8. The next diſeaſe, natural to every human ſoul, born with every man, is *love of the world*. Every man is by nature a lover of the creature, inſtead of the Creator: a *lover of pleaſure*, in every kind, *more than a lover of God*. He is a ſlave to fooliſh and hurtful deſires, in one kind or another; either to the *deſire of the fleſh*, *the deſire of the eyes*, or *the pride of life*. *The deſire of the fleſh* is, a propenſity to ſeek happineſs in what gratifies one or more of the outward ſenſes. *The deſire of the eyes* is a propenſity to ſeek happineſs in what gratifies the internal ſenſe, the imagination, either by things grand, or new, or beautiful. *The pride of life* ſeems to mean a propenſity to ſeek happineſs in what gratifies the taſte of honour. To this head is plainly referred, *the love of money*, one of the baſeſt paſſions that can have a place in the human heart. But it may be doubted, whether this be not an acquired, rather than a natural diſtemper.

9. Whether this be a natural diſeaſe or not, it is certain, *anger* is. The ancient Philoſopher defines it, "A ſenſe of injury received, with a

desire of revenge." Now, was there ever any one born of a woman, who did not labour under this? Indeed, like other diseases of the mind, it is far more violent in some than in others. But it is *furor brevis*, as the poet speaks: it is a real, though short madness wherever it is.

10. A deviation from *truth* is equally natural to all the children of men. One said in his haste, *All men are liars:* but we may say, upon cool reflection, All natural men will, upon a close temptation, vary from or disguise the truth. If they do not offend against *veracity*, if they do not say what is false, yet they frequently offend against *simplicity*. They use art: they hang out false colours: they practise either simulation or dissimulation. So that you cannot say truly of any person living, till grace has altered nature, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

11. Every one is likewise prone by nature, to speak or act contrary to *justice*. This is another of the diseases which we bring with us into the world. All human creatures are naturally partial to themselves, and when opportunity offers, have more regard to their own interest or pleasure, than strict justice allows. Neither is any man by nature *merciful*, as our heavenly Father is merciful: but all more or less transgress that glorious rule of mercy as well as justice, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, the same do unto them."

12. Now if these are the general diseases of human nature, is it not the grand end of education to cure them? And is it not the part of all those to whom God has entrusted the education of children, to take all possible care, first, not

to

to increaſe, not to feed any of theſe diſeaſes, (as the generality of parents conſtantly do) and next, to uſe every poſſible means of healing them?

13. To come to particulars. What can parents do, and mothers more eſpecially, to whoſe care our children are neceſſarily committed, in their tender years, with regard to the *Atheiſm* that is natural to all the children of men? How is this fed by the generality of parents, even thoſe that love, or at leaſt, fear God while in ſpending hours, perhaps days with their children, they hardly name the name of God? Mean time, they talk of a thouſand other things in the world that is round about them. Will not then the things of the preſent world, which ſurround theſe children on every ſide, naturally take up their thoughts, and ſet God at a greater diſtance from them, (if that be poſſible) than he was before? Do not parents feed the Atheiſm of their children farther, by aſcribing the works of creation to *nature?* Does not the common way of talking about nature leave God quite out of the queſtion? Do they not feed this diſeaſe, whenever they talk in the hearing of their children, of any thing *happening* ſo or ſo? Of things coming by *chance?* Of good or ill *fortune?* As alſo when they aſcribe this or that event, to the wiſdom or power of man: or indeed to any other ſecond cauſes, as if theſe governed the world? Yea, do they not feed it unawares, while they are talking of their own wiſdom or goodneſs, or power to do this or that, without expreſsly mentioning, that all theſe are the gifts of God? All tends to confirm the Atheiſm of their children, and to keep God out of their thoughts.

14. But

14. But we are by no means clear of their blood, if we only go thus far, if we barely do not feed their diſeaſe. What can be done to cure it? From the firſt dawn of reaſon continually inculcate, God is in this and every place. God made you, and me, and the earth, and the ſun, and the moon, and every thing. And every thing is his: heaven and earth and all that is therein. God orders all things: he makes the ſun ſhine, and the wind blow, and the trees bear fruit. Nothing comes by chance: that is a ſilly word: there is no ſuch thing as chance. As God made the world, ſo he governs the world, and every thing that is in it. Not ſo much as a ſparrow falls to the ground, without the will of God. And as he governs all things, ſo he governs all men, good and bad, little and great. He gives them all the power and wiſdom they have. And he over rules all. He gives us all the goodneſs we have: every good thought, and word and work are from him. Without him we can neither think any thing right, or do any thing right. Thus it is, we are to inculcate upon them, That God is all in all.

15. Thus may we counteract, and by the grace of God afflicting us, gradually cure the natural Atheiſm of our children. But what can we do to cure their *ſelf-will?* It is equally rooted in their nature, and is indeed the original idolatry, which is not confined to one age or country, but is common to all the nations under heaven. And how few parents are to be found even among Chriſtians, even among them that truly fear God, who are not guilty of this matter? Who do not continually feed and increaſe this grievous diſtemper in their children? To let them have their

their own will, does this moſt effectually. To let them take their own way, is the ſure method of increaſing their ſelf-will ſevenfold. But who has the reſolution to do otherwiſe? One parent in a hundred! Who can be ſo ſingular, ſo cruel, as not more or leſs to *humour* her child? "And why ſhould you not? What harm can there be in this, which every body does?" The harm is, that it ſtrengthens their will more and more, till it will neither bow to God nor man. To humour children is, as far as in us lies, to make their diſeaſe incurable. A wiſe parent, on the other hand, ſhould begin to break their will, the firſt moment it appears. In the whole art of Chriſtian education there is nothing more important than this. The will of a parent is to a little child in the place of the will of God. Therefore ſtudiouſly teach them to ſubmit to this while they are children, that they may be ready to ſubmit to his will, when they are men. But in order to carry this point, you will need incredible firmneſs and reſolution. For after you have once begun, you muſt never more give way. You muſt hold on ſtill in an even courſe: you muſt never intermit your attention for one hour; otherwiſe you will loſe your labour.

16. If you are not willing to loſe all the labour you have been at, to break the will of your child, to bring his will into ſubjection to yours, that it may be afterward ſubject to the will of God, there is one advice, which though little known, ſhould be particularly attended to. It may ſeem a ſmall circumſtance: but it is of more conſequence than one can eaſily imagine. It is this, never, on any account give a child any thing that it cries for. For it is a true obſervation, (and

(and you may make the experiment as often as you please) If you give a child what he cries for, you *pay him for crying*: and then he will certainly cry again. "But if I do not give it him when he cries, he will scream all day long." If he does, it is your own fault; for it is in your power effectually to prevent it. For no mother need suffer a child to cry aloud after it is a year old. "Why, it is impossible to hinder it." So many suppose; but it is an entire mistake. I am a witness of the direct contrary; and so are many others. My own mother had ten children, each of whom had spirit enough. Yet not one of them was ever heard to cry aloud, after it was a year old. A gentlewoman of *Sheffield*, several of whose children I suppose are alive still, assured me she had the same success, with regard to her eight children. When some were objecting to the possibility of this, Mr. *Parson Greenwood*, (well known in the North of *England*,) replied, "This cannot be impossible: I have had the proof of it in my own family. Nay, of more than this. I had six children by my former wife. And she suffered none of them to cry aloud, after they were ten months old. And yet none of their spirits were so broken, as to unfit them for any of the offices of life." This therefore may be done by any woman of sense, who may thereby save herself abundance of trouble, and prevent that disagreeable noise, the squawling of young children, from being heard under her roof. But I allow, none but a woman of sense will be able to affect this. Yea, and a woman of such patience and resolution, as only the grace of God can give. However, this is doubtless the more excellent

excellent way: and ſhe that is able to receive it, let her receive it!

It is hard to ſay, whether ſelf-will or *pride* be the more fatal diſtemper. It was chiefly pride that threw down ſo many of the ſtars of heaven, and turned angels into devils. But what can parents do, in order to check this until it can be radically cured?

Firſt, beware of adding fewel to the flame, of feeding the diſeaſe, which you ſhould cure. Almoſt all parents are guilty of doing this, by praiſing their children to their face. If you are ſenſible of the folly and cruelty of this, ſee that you ſacredly abſtain from it. And in ſpite of either fear or complaiſance, go one ſtep farther. Not only do not encourage, but do not ſuffer others, to do what you dare not do yourſelf. How few parents are ſufficiently aware of this? Or at leaſt ſufficiently reſolute to practiſe it? To check every one at the firſt word, that would praiſe them before their face. Even thoſe who would not on any account "ſit attentive to their own applauſe," nevertheleſs do not ſcruple to ſit attentive to the applauſe of their children? Yea, and that to their face! O conſider! Is not this the ſpreading a net for their feet? Is it not a grievous incentive to pride, even if they are praiſed, for what is truly praiſe-worthy? Is it not doubly hurtful, if they are praiſed, for things not truly praiſe-worthy? Things of an indifferent nature, as ſenſe, good breeding, beauty, elegance apparel! This is liable not only to hurt the heart, but their underſtanding alſo. It has a manifeſt and direct tendency, to infuſe pride and folly together: to pervert both their taſte and judgment,

judgment, teaching them to value what is dung and dross in the sight of God.

18. If on the contrary, you desire, without loss of time to strike at the root of their pride, teach your children, as soon as possibly you can, that they are fallen spirits; that they are fallen short of that glorious image of God, wherein they were first created; that they are not now, as they were once, incorruptible pictures of the God of glory; bearing the express likeness of the wise, the good, the holy Father of spirits; but more ignorant, more foolish, and more wicked, than they can possibly conceive. Shew them, that in pride, passion and revenge, they are now like the devil. And that in foolish desires and grovelling appetites, they are like the beasts of the field. Watch over them diligently in this respect, that whenever occasion offers, you may, "Pride in its earliest motions find," and check the very first appearance of it.

If you ask, "But how shall I encourage them when they do well, if I am never to commend them?" I answer, I did not affirm this: I did not say, "You are never to commend them." I know, many writers affect this, and writers of eminent piety. They say, To commend man, is to rob God, and therefore condemn it altogether. But what say the Scriptures? I read there, that our Lord himself frequently commended his own disciples: and the great Apostle forbids not to commend the Corinthians, Philippians, and divers others to whom he writes. We may not therefore condemn this altogether. But I fear we use it exceeding sparingly. And when you use it, let it be with the utmost caution, directing them at the same moment, to look upon all they have as the

the free gift of God, and with the deepeſt ſelf-abaſement to ſay, "Not unto us! Not unto us! but unto thy name we give the praiſe!"

19. Next to ſelf-will and pride, the moſt fatal diſeaſe with which we are born is, *love of the world*. But how ſtudiouſly do the generality of parents cheriſh this in its ſeveral branches? They cheriſh *the deſire of the fleſh*, that is, the tendency to ſeek happineſs in pleaſing the outward ſenſes, by ſtudying to "enlarge the pleaſures of taſting in their children to the uttermoſt: not only giving them before they are weaned other things beſide milk, the natural food of children, but giving them both before and after, any ſort of meat or drink that they will take. Yea, they entice them long before nature requires it, to take wine or ſtrong drink; and provide them with co[illegible]fits, gingerbread, raiſins and whatever fruit they have a mind to. They feed in them *the deſire of the eyes*, the propenſity to ſeek happineſs in pleaſing the imagination, by giving them pretty play-things, glittering toys, ſhining buckles or buttons, fine clothes, red ſhoes, laced hats, needleſs ornaments, as ribbons, necklaces, rubies: yea, and by propoſing any of theſe as *rewards* for doing their duty, whic[illegible] is ſtamping a great value upon them. With equ[illegible]re and attention they cheriſh in them the third branch of the love of the world, *the pride of life*, the propenſity to ſeek their happineſs in *the honour that cometh of men*. Nor is the love of money forgotten: many an exhortation do they hear on "ſecuring the main chance;" many a lecture exactly agreeing with that of the old Heathen,

Si poſſis, recte; ſi non, quocunque modo rem.

Get money honeſtly if you can; but if not; get money.

And they are carefully taught to look on riches and honour as the reward of all their labours.

20. In direct oppoſition to all this, a wiſe and truly kind parent will take the utmoſt care, not to cheriſh in her children the deſire of the fleſh, their natural propenſity to ſeek happineſs in gratifying the outward ſenſe. With this view ſhe will ſuffer them to taſte no food but milk till they are weaned: (which a thouſand experiments ſhew is moſt ſafely and eaſily done at the ſeventh month.) And then accuſtom them to the moſt ſimple food, chiefly of vegetables. She may inure them to taſte only one food, beſide bread, at dinner, and conſtantly to breakfaſt and ſup on milk, either cold, or heated; but not boiled. She may uſe them to ſit by her at meals and aſk for nothing, but take what is given them. She need never, till they are at leaſt nine or ten years old, let them know the taſte of tea, or uſe any other drink at meals, but water or ſmall beer. And they will never deſire to taſte either meat or drink between meals, if not accuſtomed thereto. If fruit, comfits or any thing of the kind be given them, let them not touch it but at meals. And never propoſe any of theſe as a reward; but teach them to look higher than this.

But herein a difficulty will ariſe, which it will need much reſolution to conquer. Your ſervants who will not underſtand your plan, will be continually giving little things to your children, and thereby undoing all your work. This you muſt prevent if poſſible, by warning them when they firſt

firſt come into your houſe, and repeating the warning from time to time. If they *will* do it notwithſtanding, you muſt turn them away. Better loſe a good ſervant than ſpoil a good child.

Poſſibly you may have another difficulty to encounter, and one of a ſtill more trying nature. Your mother, or your huſband's mother, may live with you; and you will do well to ſhew her all poſſible reſpect. But let her on no account have the leaſt ſhare in the management of your children. She would undo all that you had done; ſhe would give them their own will in all things. She would humour them to the deſtruction of their ſouls, if not their bodies too. In fourſcore years I have not met with one woman that knew how to manage grand-children. My own mother, who governed her children ſo well, could never govern one grand-child. In every other point obey your mother. Give up your will to hers. But with regard to the management of your children, ſteadily keep the reins in your own hands.

21. A wife and kind parent will be equally cautious, of feeding *the deſire of the eyes* in her children. She will give them no pretty play-things, no glittering toys, ſhining buckles or buttons, fine or gay clothes: no needleſs ornaments of any kind; nothing that can attract the eye. Nor will ſhe ſuffer any other perſon to give them what ſhe will not give them herſelf. Any thing of the kind that is offered, may be either civilly refuſed, or received and laid by. If they are diſpleaſed at this, you cannot help it. Complaiſance, yea, and temporal intereſt, muſt

needs be ſet aſide, when the eternal intereſts of your children are at ſtake.

Your pains will be well requited, if you can inſpire them early, with a contempt of all finery; and on the other hand, with a love and eſteem, for neat plainneſs of dreſs. Teaching them to aſſociate the ideas of plainneſs and modeſty: and thoſe of a fine and lovely woman. Likewiſe inſtil into them as early as poſſible a fear and contempt of pomp and grandeur, an abhorrence and dread of the love of money, and a deep conviction, that riches cannot give happineſs. Wean them therefore from all theſe falſe ends: habituate them to make God their end in all things, and nurture them in all they do, to aim at knowing, loving and ſerving God.

22. Again, The generality of parents feed *anger* in their children, yea, the worſt part of it, that is revenge. The filly mother ſays, "What hurt my child! Give me a blow for it." What horrid work is this? Will not the old murderer teach them this leſſon faſt enough? Let the chriſtian parent ſpare no pains to teach them juſt the contrary. Remind them of the words of our bleſſed Lord, "It was ſaid of old, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not evil." Not by returning evil for evil. Rather than this, "if a man take away thy cloak, let him take thy coat alſo." Remind him of the words of the great Apoſtle, "Dearly beloved, Avenge not yourſelves. For it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, ſaith the Lord."

23. The generality of parents feed and increaſe the natural *falſehood* of their children. How often may we hear that ſenſeleſs word? "No, it

was

was not *you*; it was not my child that did it: fay, it was the cat." What amazing folly is this? Do you feel no remorfe, while you are putting a lie in the mouth of your child, before it can fpeak plain? And do not you think, it will make a good proficiency, when it comes to years of difcretion? Others teach them both diffimulation and lying, by their unreafonable feverity: and yet others, by admiring and applauding their ingenious lies and cunning tricks. Let the wife parent on the contrary, teach them to *fet away all lying*, and both in little things and great, in jeft or earneft, fpeak the very truth from their heart. Teach them that the author of all falfehood is the devil, who *is a liar and the father of it*. Teach them to abhor and defpife, not only lying, but all equivocating, all cunning and diffimulation. Ufe every means to give them a love of truth: of veracity, fincerity and fimplicity, and of openneſs both of fpirit and behaviour.

24. Moft parents increafe the natural tendency to *injuftice* in their children, by conniving at their wronging each other, if not laughing at, or even applauding their witty contrivances to cheat one another. Beware of every thing of this kind: and from their very infancy, ſow the ſeeds of juſtice in their hearts; and train them up in the exacteſt practice of it. If poſſible, teach them the love of juſtice, and that in the leaſt things as well as the greateſt. Impreſs upon their mind the old proverb, "He that will ſteal a penny, will ſteal a pound." Habituate them to render unto all their due, even to the uttermoſt farthing.

25. Many parents connive likewiſe at the *ill nature* of their children, and thereby ſtrengthen it.

it. But truly affectionate parents will not indulge them in any kind or degree of *unmercifulness*. They will not suffer them to vex their brothers or sisters, either by word or deed. They will not allow them to hurt or give pain to any thing that has life. They will not permit them to rob birds-nests, much less to kill any thing without necessity: not even snakes, which are as innocent as worms, or toads, and which notwithstanding their ugliness, and the ill name they lie under, have been proved over and over, to be as harmless as flies. Let them extend in its measure, the rule of doing as they would be done by, to every animal whatsoever. Ye that are truly kind parents, in the morning, in the evening, and all the day beside, press upon all your children, to "walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us:" to mind that one point, "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.